# The Saturday Review of Literature

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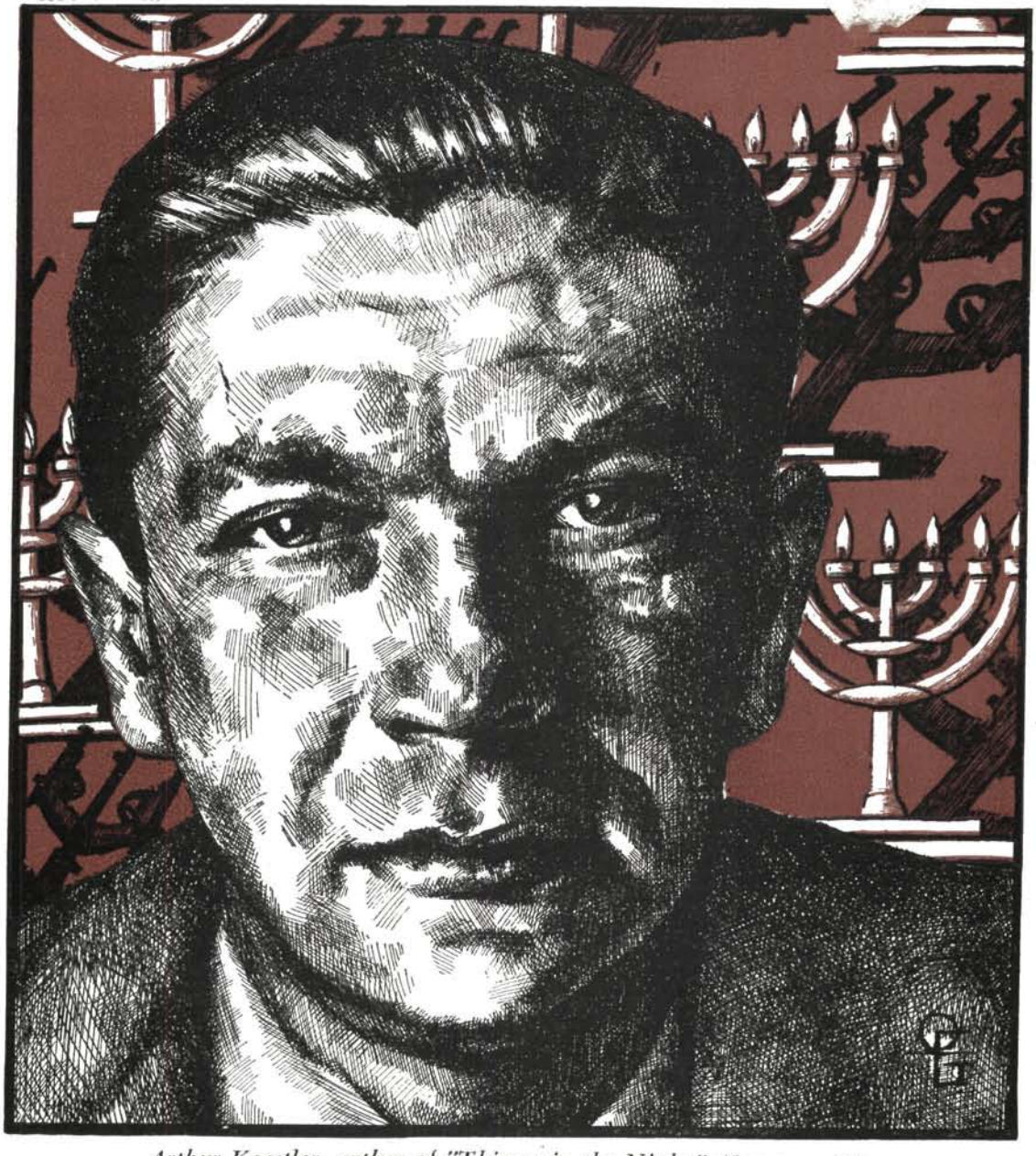

*Arthur Koestler, author of "Thieves in the Night."* *(See page 12)*

## American Literature in Russia

By ROBERT MAGIDOFF

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# This Week

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## Article


PAGE

AMERICAN LITERATURE IN RUSSIA
By Robert Magidoff..... 9


## Reviews


THIEVES IN THE NIGHT
By Arthur Koestler
*Reviewed by Robert Pick*.....12

B. F.'s DAUGHTER
By John P. Marquand
*Reviewed by John Woodburn*.....13

THE ROOSEVELT I KNEW
By Frances Perkins
*Reviewed by Ernest K. Lindley*....14

THE GREAT DILEMMA OF WORLD ORGANIZATION
By Fremont Rider
*Reviewed by Grenville Clark*.....15

HIROSHIMA
By John Hershey
*Reviewed by Louis Ridenour*.....16

SELECTED WRITINGS OF GERTRUDE STEIN
Edited by Carl Van Vechten
*Reviewed by Leo Lerman*.....17

THE MUSES' DARLING
By Charles Norman
*Reviewed by Ben Ray Redman*....19

THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES
By K. A. Popper
*Reviewed by Julius Kraft*.....21

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NONSENSE
By Bergen Evans
*Reviewed by Basil Davenport*.....26

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT
By Merriman Smith
*Reviewed by Jonathan Daniels*.....26

THE SPEAR IN THE SAND
By Raoul C. Faure
*Reviewed by Ben Ray Redman*.....34

THE BITTER SEASON
By Robert M. Coates
*Reviewed by Donald Hough*.....36

DEATH MY GENERATION
By Michael Fyodrov
*Reviewed by F. C. Weiskopf*.....38


## Departments


TRADE WINDS
By Bennett Cerf..... 4

LITERARY I.Q.....22

STRICTLY PERSONAL
By Edward A. McCourt.....23

EDITORIAL .....24

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....25

SEEING THINGS
By John Mason Brown.....28

LITERARY CRYPT.....39

THE CRIMINAL RECORD.....44

THE NEW RECORDINGS
By Edward Tatnall Canby.....47

THE PHOENIX NEST
By William Rose Benét.....48

DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 658.....51



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Morrow

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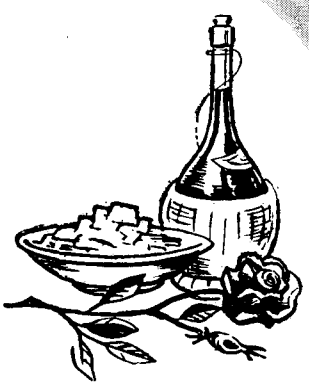

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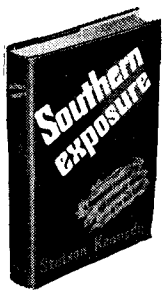
# "From where I sit"

SOME time ago a young man from Georgia came into my office to discuss certain passages in the book he had written. The keynote of those passages was truth without mercy, and where it warranted, there were bitter words—the truth is often so. Yet the young man's face betrayed no anger, and during our pow-wow he laughed heartily several times.

The result of many years of painstaking and often hazardous research is a book exposing the enemies and the neglect of democracy in the South, and called, appropriately enough **Southern Exposure.** Its author, STETSON KENNEDY, is surprisingly enough, no damnyankee. On the contrary, he has lived in the South all his life. His grandfather fought for the Confederacy, and two ancestors, Arthur Middleton of South Carolina and William Williams of Georgia were signers of the Declaration of Independence. He loves the South and he wants to see it become the sort of place he believes it can be.




Right now, the South is far from the place it could be. Its distrust and fear of democracy are pathological, its demagogical spokesmen even more so.

There are several major problems in the South; any way you look at it, economically, sociologically, politically, it is the poor third of our nation. Further investigation reveals a tie-up between all these factors, the tie-up of the anti-democratic mind. Its pathology is very intricate and often very difficult to track down. It is not merely a question of checking Senator So-and-So's voting record over a period of years. Nor is it enough to go further and see who has how much money behind such-and-such outfits. The pattern of reaction is all too easy to trace and dismiss by those methods. But the extraordinary financial — political — and bigotrical (if there is such a word) links have resulted in a mental attitude towards the Negro and voting and unions and education and TVA and sharecropping that has made certain men blind to all issues save those likely to insure personal triumph. These men, in and out of office, with the white sheets of prejudice over their minds constitute the biggest homeland menace to democracy, and it is these men along with their medieval institutions that STETSON KENNEDY so courageously attacks in this explosive book.

*paul*

**DOUBLEDAY**


# TRADE Winds

**EDITORIAL RESHUFFLINGS** are no novelty at Doubleday's, but the latest in the series affects the top-line posts. Nelson Doubleday moves up from president to chairman of the board. In his old place will be Douglas M. Black, clean-cut, hard-hitting, universally liked. Black is a graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was a member of the championship debating team that also included the well-known attorney Horace Manges. Black was the Doubleday legal counsel for years, stepped into the editorial setup early in the recent war. New vice president in charge of sales is Milo Sutliff, who knows all the answers, and seems to launch another successful book club every alternate Tuesday. . . . A new Doubleday post, "v.p. in charge of engineering," goes to Rear Admiral Luis de Florez, known in the Navy as a "wizard in machinery." Doubleday is building a four-million-dollar plant in Hanover, Pa., where it hopes to print books and bind them in hard covers in a single operation. De Florez is counted upon to eliminate the kinks that have made such an operation impractical to date. . . . Publishers' Row is also agog with a story, unconfirmed to date, that another old-line house may be sold to a banking syndicate for six millions, more or less. Publishing is big business these days! . . .

**NELSON DOUBLEDAY'S** entry into his father's publishing house in the early 1920's did not follow the customary pattern of a rich man's son "beginning at the bottom and learning the business." He had insisted on trying out his own wings first, and succeeded so well that his father had to buy out his mail-order firm of "Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Oyster Bay" at a very fancy figure in order to secure his services.

**This photograph, used in connection with a Doubleday ad of August 1923 helped sell over a million copies of "Book of Etiquette."**

Nelson began his business by purchasing thousands of magazines that had been returned unsold by newsstand dealers and offering them as "deferred subscriptions" at half the usual price. The First World War, however, boomed the sale of magazines to such an extent that returns became negligible. His source of supply cut off, Nelson had to change his entire setup. He decided to test the mail-order book business. One of the books that showed up best in his first tests was the Holt "Book of Etiquette." The ads for it had been written by Lillian Eichler, then a copywriter for the advertising agency of Ruthrauff and Ryan. "This looks easy," Doubleday told her. "Why not write an etiquette book yourself?" Miss Eichler agreed. She declared later, "Nelson Doubleday could have persuaded me to compile a Greek dictionary if he'd had a mind to."

The Eichler "Book of Etiquette" was published on September 21, 1921 and, by means of a spectacular advertising campaign, sold over a million copies in its first year. You may remember some of the layouts. They involved "narrative copy" and photographs of distressed damsels impaled upon the horns of social dilemmas. One was headed "Why I Cried After the Ceremony," and told the heartbreaking tale of the bride who gummed up the works by standing on the wrong side of the groom, plus other *faux pas* that she never would have committed if she had read the Eichler book. A second ad posed the question, "May She Invite Him In?," a third challenged "Can You Tell What's Wrong with This Picture?" Most famous of all, and most effective in raking in orders, was the story of the girl who didn't know what to do when her beau invited her out to dinner. "Again She Ordered Chicken Salad!" read the doleful advertisement. The Doubleday organization figures that this copy alone sold half a million books and cut the consumption of chicken salad seventy per cent.

Nelson Doubleday brought the Eichler book with him when he joined his father, "Effendi." It is still selling more than 25,000 copies a year. Miss Eichler's greatest triumph came the day Emily Post complained to a hos-



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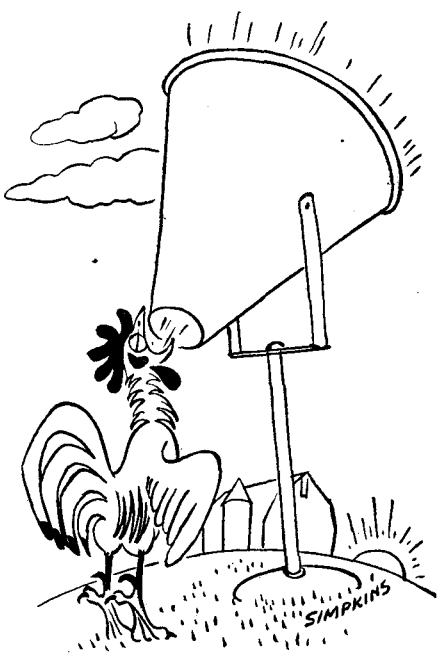
tess that her table was not set properly. "Oh, yes, it is," said the hostess —and produced the Eichler book to prove her point. . . .

**THE CELEBRATION OF** G. B. Shaw's ninetieth birthday sent M. I. Pitkin scurrying to the files to see if any writing man of the first order could challenge his record for longevity. Here are some figures he unearthed, arranged in ascending scale. Chatterton died (by his own hand) at eighteen; Keats at twenty-six; Marlowe (in a tavern brawl) at twenty-nine; Shelley at thirty; Byron at thirty-six; Burns at thirty-seven; Poe at forty; Jane Austen at forty-two; De Maupassant at forty-three; Virgil, Molière, and Balzac at fifty-one;

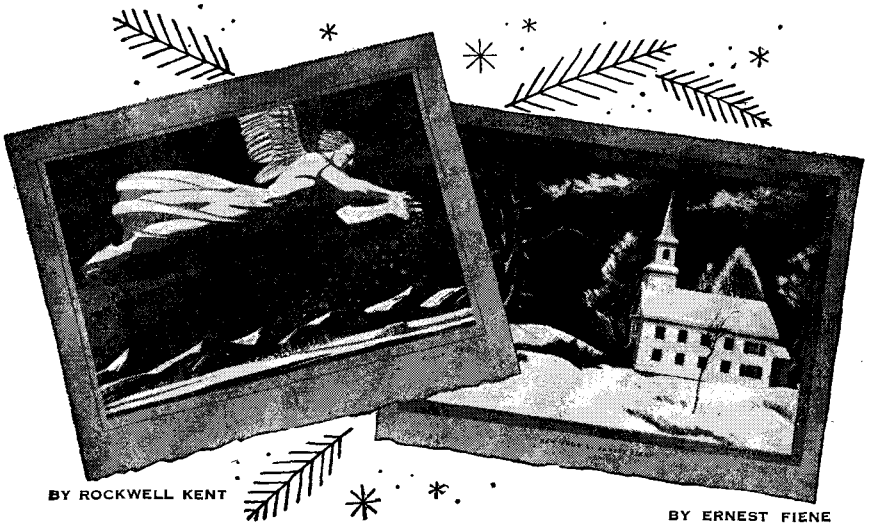



Shakespeare and Thackeray at fifty-two; Dante and Pope at fifty-six; Dickens at fifty-eight; Chaucer, Racine, and Hawthorne at sixty; Aristotle, Coleridge, and Zola at sixty-two; Milton at sixty-six; Conrad at sixty-seven; Cervantes at sixty-nine; Defoe at seventy; Melville at seventy-two; Sam Johnson at seventy-five; Washington Irving at seventy-six; Browning at seventy-seven; Ibsen at seventy-eight; Emerson at seventy-nine; Plato and Wordsworth at eighty; Meredith at eighty-one; Tolstoy at eighty-two; Goethe and Tennyson at eighty-three; Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin at eighty-four; Carlyle at eighty-six; and Hardy at eighty-eight. . . . "There were many grizzled stalwarts there," comments Mr. Pitkin, "but in the words of Percy Atkinson, 'There is no second money in the hall of fame.' Take the case of Methuselah's grand-pap, Jared. He lived to be 962 years old—only seven years


**WORKS OF ART!**

*American Artists Group*

**CHRISTMAS CARDS**



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LADDERS TO FIRE brings out with daring honesty the frustrations and ecstasies of today's woman as she whirls toward self-destruction. Writing in what she describes as "the swift rhythm of our time," Miss Nin's prose soars with a freedom and precision that makes her work stimulating and alive.

*Rebecca West* hails Anais Nin as a *"real and unmistakable genius."* She has won high praise from Edmund Wilson, Kay Boyle, William Carlos Williams and others. Until now Miss Nin's work has appeared only in Paris and in privately printed American editions—but already her reputation has spread far in literary circles.

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E. P. DUTTON

"Through?"

less than his illustrious grandson. That wasn't good enough; he remains to this day unknown, unhonored, and unsung." . . . Let's give that boy Jared a great big hand, just to please Mr. Pitkin. . . .

**I HAVE RECEIVED** a letter from Alice B. Toklas, telling me that she means to go on living in the Paris apartment she shared for so many years with Gertrude Stein. Gertrude died clasping copies of her last book, "Brewsie and Willie," in either hand. They arrived while she was in the hospital. The last piece she wrote was a foreword to the just-published one-volume selection of her writings, edited, with her full approval, by Carl Van Vechten. . . . S. Jay Kaufman's young nephew, Arthur Orrmont, winner of the Avery Hopwood short story award three years running, is now an assistant editor for Farrar, Straus. . . . That firm's first novel, incidentally, James Branch Cabell's "There Were Two Pirates," is selling extremely well, although some booksellers think a three-dollar tag on a 121-page volume is laying it on too heavily even in these days of soaring costs. . . . One big jobber in town is willing to bet that every quarter-book line in the country will be up to thirty-five cents by February 1. . . . Tupper and Love, new publishing house in Atlanta, Georgia, announce as their first offering "Together," the memoirs of Katherine Tupper Marshall, wife of General of the Army George C. Marshall. Thousands of regular Army wives should be interested in knowing how it feels to be married to the Big Boss! . . .

**IN SHOLOM ALEICHEM'S** "The Old Country" (Crown) appears the original version of the meeting between a poor old man from a Russian ghetto and Baron Rothschild in Paris. The Baron's butler, seeing the old man's tattered raiment, doesn't want to let him in, but is brushed aside with a scornful, "Fool! If I had good clothes, would I have bothered coming to Paris?" Then the Baron is intrigued by the promise of eternal life. The price of the secret is three hundred rubles. The old man pockets his gold —the most he ever has seen—and tells the Baron, "It's simple enough. Just move to our ghetto. No rich man ever has died there in our history." . . . Sholem Aleichem is credited, too, with that solid piece of advice to a lovesick Lothario: "Remember, my boy, you can marry more money in five minutes than you can make in a lifetime." . . .

**THE FALL ANNOUNCEMENT** issue of *Publishers' Weekly*—almost as bulky as the original manuscript of "Gone with the Wind"—brought forth this sage counsel from a veteran bookseller: "Some publishers who are spreading themselves all over the map should remember a saying of Goethe: 'Limitation of aim is the mother of wisdom and the secret of achievement'!"

BENNETT CERF.



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# *Who are the "thieves in the night"*
# *in* PRESENT-DAY PALESTINE?

ENGLISHMEN LIKE SMITH?

What is actually happening in Palestine? The headlines and news stories tell us the external facts. But ARTHUR KOESTLER, by the magic of a great novelist's art, breathes life into the people involved in the conflict—Jews, Arabs, British, and Americans alike—and makes them understandable in this, his greatest novel.

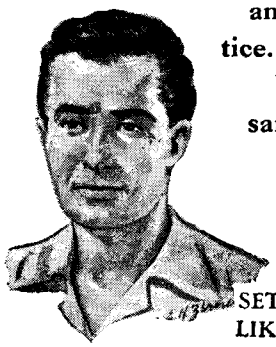
Clifton Fadiman, in a *New Yorker* review, once wrote that "if Koestler develops, he may quite conceivably become the great writer of our generation." THIEVES IN THE NIGHT goes a long way toward fulfilling that prediction. The background of THIEVES IN THE NIGHT is the actual life of a Jewish settlement in Palestine, from the erection of the barricade, through the deadly battles with the Arabs, the daily life, the conflicts between the settlers themselves, to the final (relative) security and prosperity of the settlement.

ARABS LIKE KAMEL EFFENDI?

Against this background, we see the gradual change of Joseph, half-English, half-Jewish, from a peaceful settler to a terrorist, and know why he comes to feel that force is the final answer to the Jewish problem—and perhaps to all such problems in the world. However, if you think of this novel *only* as an analysis of the Jewish dilemma by a brilliant thinker (*which it is*), or as a fine novel about the present-day conflict in Palestine (*which it is*), or as a typical Koestlerian penetration of the motives and psychology of men and women (*which it is*), you will be doing the book an injustice. For it also has suspense and sheer story on every page.

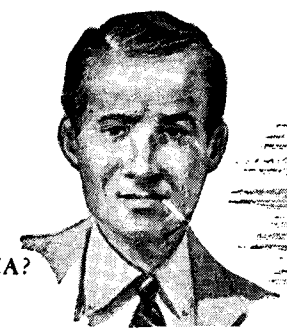
With THIEVES IN THE NIGHT Koestler should win the same overwhelming approval from the public that he won long ago from the critics.

TERRORISTS LIKE BAUMAN?



SETTLERS LIKE JOSEPH?

WOMEN LIKE DINA?



AMERICANS LIKE MATTHEWS?

## *Arthur Koestler's* greatest novel

# THIEVES IN THE NIGHT

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MACMILLAN



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# Roses for Resistance

LETTERS from home are full of simple things.

*Item:* Harry's shovel operator laid off to harvest his grapes.

*Item:* We got a big cheese from Richard, about 5 or 6 pounds. A little more solid than pot cheese but tastes a lot like it.

*Item:* Radio said snow yesterday but it was nice and cool. Just nice fall weather and Harry got horse-chestnuts.

Luckily we believe in rather simple things. How many times have tried men's souls doesn't seem to be the point, since we are not looking for a millennium. What is important is that each of us has a soul to be tried and that, although we are alone and sometimes confused, we can still place our own bets. We can decide to harvest our own grapes or paint our own pictures or write our own books.

It is a never failing source of excitement to us to realize this all over again—for, like nearly everyone else, we find the juice of life in those things which set us off from one another. Particularly in times of real crisis, the actions of different men in similar circumstances have a greater fascination than beauty to the eye of the beholder. Turning to a private file in the alphabetized corner of our mind, here is a case in point. Under the "f's"—*France: Occupation.* It's a brief note concerning three men, Raoul Dufy, Jean Paul Sartre, François Mauriac, and what they did aside from just being good Frenchmen during the Occupation. The note is short, stating only that Dufy painted roses, Sartre developed existentialism, Mauriac wrote WOMAN OF THE PHARISEES. We filed it in the first place because of Dufy, whose achievement is perhaps the most spectacular of the three. Crippled by arthritis, he painted gay, delicate roses with brushes strapped to his wrists because his fingers were unable to support their weight. That sort of thing fills us with a not easily defined emotion, except that in some way his accomplishment reflects on us as part of that same human race which can never be wholly barbaric so long as one man endures pain to create beauty. Sartre and Mauriac became part of the original notation because, of course, each produced his own answer in that one time of physical and emotional violence. But while Sartre already has been the subject of a mighty flow of language here, Mauriac, who is perhaps the greatest living French novelist, is too little known. His last novel to be published in English came out in 1933, and we are proud to be the house that now brings him back before the large public he deserves.

Even in translation, WOMAN OF THE PHARISEES is one of the most masterly pieces of prose we have read in a long time. It is primarily the story of one woman, domineering and hypocritical, who wrecks the lives of all those close to her by trying to impose her will on them. That she does it in her chosen role of instrument for the "true church" makes her literally a woman of the Pharisees. Time and again, in a first and second reading, we found ourselves wondering at the clean certainty that could produce a book like this in the middle of a war. Best explanation to date came from one of our editors, who explained it as "a singular tenacity inherent in French culture and reflected in the ability of the best French writers always to get down to first principles." We bought that one and extend it to painters too, especially Raoul Dufy and his roses.

Brigitte Pian, "woman" of Mauriac's novel, is intent on doing good and, single-purposed as a man in search of lebensraum, she tracks her victims down. Lucky Octave, her undistinguished husband, early departs this life by bottle and escapes her. Not so fortunate, Puybaraud and his Octavia, dependent on Brigitte's good graces for their very lives. Not so fortunate, Jean de Mirbel and his girl, whose love is distorted and tainted by Brigitte's heavy hand. Not so fortunate, the Abbé Calou, whose dishonor is the only reward of his tender care of Jean, of his wise understanding of Brigitte. The Abbé's diary records that "if ever that gift of judgment and condemnation which she now exercises at the expense of others is turned against herself, she's in for a bad time!"

With the impersonal skill of a master surgeon, François Mauriac lays bare these tender hearts. And gradually, as her hapless victims meet misfortune, Brigitte comes into her own bad time; her own heart is laid bare to her own eyes. Louis, her son, through whose memory the story is told, is as chilly toward the reformation of Brigitte as the reader is. But Brigitte persists. She humbles herself and, as the years go along, understanding comes to both of them. In the end, no longer of the Pharisees, Brigitte knows "it is not our deserts that matter, but our love."

We expect this will be only the first of a number of books by M. Mauriac which Henry Holt and Company will publish. There's a clean, deep satisfaction in his writing that makes us think our belief in simple things may be based on those "first principles" of which our editor dreams.


**Woman of the Pharisees**

by FRANÇOIS MAURIAC

*Translated by GERARD HOPKINS*

*$2.50*

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

HENRY HOLT & COMPANY




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*The Saturday Review of Literature*

# American Literature in Russia

ROBERT MAGIDOFF

FORTY million copies of nearly one thousand books by 201 American writers and poets have been published in Soviet Russia since 1917. No statistics are available on the number of books by Americans published in Czarist Russia, but these, too, ran into the millions.

At the top of the list is Jack London, whose works have appeared in 567 editions comprising 10,367,000 copies. Mark Twain comes second with three million copies. Upton Sinclair is a close third with 2,889,000, followed by Ernest Seton Thompson's 2,011,000 and O. Henry's 1,403,000. Bret Harte is practically in the million class with his 969,000 copies, including two recent editions.

Other American writers whose works have appeared in Russia after 1917, in the descending order of their popularity, are: Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Sinclair Lewis, Edward Bellamy, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (this applies only to "The Song of Hiawatha," issued in 123,835 copies in a translation by Ivan Bunin that some consider a greater work of art than the original), Pearl Buck, Erskine Caldwell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Conrad Bercovici, Edgar Allan Poe, Jack Conroy, Walt Whitman, John Dos Passos, Langston Hughes, Michael Gold, Waldo Frank, Irving Cobb, Eugene O'Neill (one-volume collection of seven plays, 25,000 copies), Ben Hecht, Edna Ferber, Rex Beach, Ring Lardner, Claude McKay, Booth Tarkington, Maxwell Bodenheim, Zona Gale, Louis Bromfield, Harry Kemp, and Nathan Asch.

The penetration of American literature into Russia began a century and a quarter ago. Its significance as a source of information about "the great republic beyond the ocean" has been greater than its service as a source of pleasure or a creator of esthetic values. American literature has definitely been an important factor in shaping Russian thought, a literary and political influence spreading the revolutionary spirit of American democracy. The political aspect of this influence was particularly telling on generations of Russians who fought the czars but who after the revolution of 1917 receded in importance.

A tradition of respect for and curiosity about the literatures of other nations has always been strong in Russia, but it was only in the early nineteenth century that translations made foreign literature available to the common people. Vasili Zhukovsky, poet and tutor to Czar Alexander II, pioneered the translation of verse into a Russian that became the language of modern Russian poetry, supplanting the archaic if vigorous tongue of Lomonosov and Derzhavin.

Zhukovsky's art was such that the publication date of his rendition of Gray's "Elegy" is regarded by some Russian literary critics as the birthday of modern Russian poetry. Zhukovsky's mastery established a high standard for Russian translators, among whom one finds some of the country's best poets, including Pushkin, Lermontov, Fet, Balmont, Briusov, Bunin, and Pasternak. Similarly, Russian translators of prose are, on the whole, superior to the translators of Russian writings, both in the United States and England.

—*Helen Black.*

**Washington Irving drawn by Leo Brodat for a Russian collection of American stories.**

American literature began to penetrate into Russia much earlier than Russian into America. The intense interest in the United States, a republic created of and by revolution, was responsible for that. "A Brief Account of the Life and Personality of General Washington," written in 1784 by the Russian publisher and educator N. Novikov, concludes: "Rome had its Camilla, Greece had Leonidas, Sweden Gustav, England Russell and Sidney. These glorious heroes, however, do not compare to Washington: he founded a republic which will doubtless be a haven for liberty banished from Europe by luxury and corruption."

FRANKLIN was the first American author to be translated into Russian. "Poor Richard's Almanac" appeared in St. Petersburg in 1784, followed ten years later by Moscow publication of "Excerpts from Franklin's Notes with a Brief Description of His Life and Several of His Works." In 1789 Franklin was unanimously elected a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, despite Catherine the Second's dislike and fear of the American revolutionist.

Admiration for American democracy gave rise to an almost mystical feeling among the Russians that there was a preordained similarity of geography and political destiny between the people of the United States and those of Russia. This feeling, which has retained some force to this day, has been shared by many Americans and even by men of other countries. Walt Whitman gave it eloquent expression in his "Letter to a Russian." The French historian de Tocqueville insisted in his book on American democracy that only two great modern peoples were heading toward a magnificent future—the Russians and the Americans.

The Decembrists, members of a revolutionary organization whose uprising on December 14, 1825 was



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drowned in blood, patterned their planned reorganization of Russia on the Constitution of the United States. Whether or not the Decembrists knew of Philip Freneau's lines on liberty,

To Russia's frozen lands
The generous flame expands,

they drew freely on United States history and heroes and made American democracy a subject for study for all future generations of Russian revolutionaries.

The fresh political winds that blew from the West prepared the ground for American literature at just about the time it was beginning to come into its own. First were Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper. Their works appeared in the twenties and thirties of the last century, rendered into the Russian from French translations. Russia's greatest poet, Alexander Pushkin, had seven of Irving's books in his library, and a Spanish legend he discovered in "The Alhambra" formed the basis for the "Tale of the Golden Cockerel," which later inspired one of Rimsky-Korsakov's finest operas.

Irving's "Sketch Book" was the first of his works to appear in Russian. Interest in Irving continued after the Revolution and 259,000 copies of his works came out between 1918 and 1943. But the period of his influence has long passed.

Fenimore Cooper made his first appearance in Russia with "The Spy." It was published in Moscow in 1825, a poor translation made from Walter Scott's rendering in French. Cooper's popularity grew from novel to novel until "The Last of the Mohicans" made him friend and companion of millions of Russians, especially boys.

Cooper's most ardent admirer in Russia was the great literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, who enthusiastically characterized "The Pathfinder" as possessing the power and insight of a Shakespearean drama. After a four-hour visit with the poet Mikhail Lermontov, who had been imprisoned for duelling, Belinsky wrote to a friend: "I was beside myself with joy when Lermontov told me that Cooper was greater than Walter Scott; that there was more depth and creative unity in Cooper's works. I have held this view for a long time and have found in Lermontov the first person who thought the same."

Like Mark Twain and Jack London, Cooper has marked a definite stage in the life of millions of Russian youths for generations. Cooper's "discovers" America for them. Maxim Gorky once remarked: "Reading the memoirs of Russian revolutionaries, we frequently find them paying tribute to Cooper's writings as first-class educators which developed in them a sense of honor, courage, and action."

RUSSIAN children, like American, have for generations been playing Indians, but American boys are deprived of the additional joys and heartaches of "running away to America," so wistfully depicted in Chekov's short story "Montigomo the Hawk's Claw." If anything, Cooper's popularity with the Russians has grown since the Revolution. Soviet publishing houses have put out two editions of his collected works, in addition to 330,000 copies of his more popular novels.

Few books have touched the hearts of men with the power of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Russia has been no exception. Generations of Russians have used the book as a political weapon in their own struggles. It proved an especially effective ally in the struggle for the liberation of serfs in Russia. In 1838, the editor of the radical monthly *Contemporary,* Nikolai Chernishevsky, one of Russia's noblest democrats and social thinkers, sent every subscriber a free copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Leo Tolstoy, who first read the book in 1854, two years after its publication in the United States, said forty years later that he wished he could write a Russian "Uncle Tom's Cabin" about serfs. The book has not lost its significance as a political weapon to this hour, and whenever the present-day problems of the American Negro are discussed in the Soviet Union, references to "Uncle Tom's Cabin" are inevitable. Soviet children, like children everywhere, weep and laugh over the story. It has been reissued fourteen times since the Revolution.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of Edgar Allan Poe on Russian poetry in the nineties and the early twentieth century. The first translations of Poe appeared in 1849, but with the Symbolist school in the nineties Poe's verse became one of the most important foreign influences in the history of Russian poetry. Constantine Balmont, an outstanding Symbolist poet who translated all of Poe's works, referred to him as the "first Symbolist of the nineteenth century," and, more ecstatically, as "my adored singer of songs, the most star-like of all troubadours of eternity, lost wandering on our planet." In yet another revealing message Balmont wrote: "Poe's poetry is closer than any other to our complicated sick souls; it is the very embodiment of majestic consciousness that stares in horror at the inevitability of the wild chaos encompassing it on every side."

Poe's prose has not taken as firm a root in Russia as his poetry, but the prose, too, has left its imprint on the writings of a number of Russian authors. The most outstanding of them is Dostoievsky. The Symbolist poet Valery Bruisov referred to Poe as Dostoievsky's "precursor and teacher in the field of subtle psychology." A lesser Russian writer influenced by Poe was Leonid Andreiev. He spoke of the American as the world's "greatest madman who is at the same time its most perfect logician."

Walt Whitman is the only American poet who can rival Poe's popularity in Russia, but recognition came to him much more slowly, just as in the United States. Translations of Whitman's verse began to appear only at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the first, incomplete, edition of "Leaves of Grass" was issued in 1907. The three previous attempts, the first as early as 1872, to introduce the good gray poet to the Russians failed, although made by such men as Ivan Turgeniev and Leo Tolstoy.

Even when that indefatigable poet and translator Balmont finally got to Whitman and rendered a number of his poems into the Russian, they went practically unnoticed. Whitman finally got to the Russians by a curious and,

*—Part of collection of book illustrations from Helen Black, American representative, Preslit Literary Agency of Moscow.*

**Drawing by Feodor Konstantin for Mark Twain's "Journalism in Tennessee."**



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indeed, Whitmanesque incident involving a young critic and children's poet, Kornei Ivanovitch Chukovsky. Here is his own story:

> A drunken Russian sailor accosted me in the harbor, trying to sell me a bottle of rum he had smuggled through. I told him I didn't drink. Then he forced a little volume into my hand, winked at me and whispered: "Forbidden book." It was Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." I paid twenty kopecks for it and before I ever got to my house, I became A Whitmanite. I sank in that book like a nail in the ocean. Its colossal breadth completely swallowed me. I began to perceive everything through Walt Whitman, and, as I read "Song of Myself," it seemed to me it was about myself. And I understood then that my life's purpose was to preach Whitman.

Chukovsky, now seventy years old, has been spreading the gospel of Whitman for two-score years and constantly improving his translations, the tenth edition of which appeared in 1944.

The task of bringing Whitman to the Russians proved at the beginning ungrateful and sometimes dangerous. In 1905, in connection with the publication of "Pioneers, O Pioneers!," Chukovsky was persecuted for "shaking the fundamentals of the State." In 1911 a complete edition of "Leaves of Grass" was destroyed by order of the Moscow court. In 1913 the police of Kharkov, Odessa, Riga, and Vilno forbade Chukovsky, then on a lecture tour, even so much as to mention the American poet. Had the czars been as printed-word-conscious and strict as the Bolsheviks, Chukovsky might have spent much of his life in Siberia.

THE literary critics were almost as mad as the police. Some of them accused Chukovsky of "inventing Walt Whitman in order to avoid responsibility for tasteless, anarchic verse." One reviewer even went so far as to accuse Chukovsky of insanity, adding, however, that enough sense was left in him to invent a Walt Whitman to weather the storm of unfavorable criticism. However, the Futurist poets of Russia, to whom Whitman was as much of a revelation as he was to Chukovsky, embraced the American bard. One of the first Futurists, Khlebnikov, called Whitman "the cosmic psycho-receiver," and loved to listen for hours to recitations from Whitman in the original, although his knowledge of English was inadequate.

Other Futurists shared Khlebnikov's passion for Whitman, and even Vladimir Mayakovsky, called by Stalin "the greatest poet of our Soviet era," did not escape Whitman's influence. Mayakovsky first heard of Whitman from Chukovsky, and would listen for hours to the latter's recitations from "Leaves of Grass." After 1917, the triumphant Soviets embraced Walt Whitman as they did Jack London. "Pioneers, O Pioneers!" was printed in leaflet form and distributed in tens of thousands of copies. An adaptation of "Europe" was staged in July 1918 in the Petrograd Palace of Proletarian Culture. One of the first books published by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was Whitman's verse, issued early in 1918 under the title "Poetry of the Democracy of the Future."

—*Helen Black.*

One of N. Kuzmin's illustrations for "The Gold Bug," by Edgar Allan Poe.

Mark Twain and Jack London are the two American writers who have come to mean most to Russian readers. Their books can be found in the libraries of Russia's greatest political leaders, artists, and scientists, in peasant huts, in the dressing rooms of ballet dancers, and on the shelves of every village and factory library in Russia.

In addition to numerous pre-Revolutionary publications of Mark Twain, the first twenty-six years of the Soviet regime have given the lovers of American literature a fine edition of his complete works and nearly three million copies of nineteen of his most popular books. Even during the war Soviet publishing houses kept issuing Mark Twain, with several editions printed by the Red Army and Red Navy publishing branches.

Mark Twain's first story to appear (1872) in a Russian translation, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," launched him on a career as one of most popular, and certainly the best loved, foreign writer in the land of aristocratic Turgeniev, brooding Dostoievsky, and pan-humanistic Tolstoy. The story appeared in the St. Petersburg *Stock Exchange News*, accompanied by an article on Mark Twain which spoke of him as a writer distinguished "by a highly original gift molded under the influence of the completely new life now springing up in the deserts of California and the mountains of Sierra Nevada." Warning readers not to expect literary finesse from a young gold seeker and Mississippi boat pilot, the paper paid tribute to his "inexhaustible supply of humor, vivid imagination, powerful fantasy, and unaffected gaiety."

From then on, stories by Mark Twain began to appear regularly in Russian papers and magazines. The very selections of stories in the first magazine to print Mark Twain, *Homeland Notes*, in 1877 serve to show that the Russians early appreciated him alike as a brilliant humorist and story teller, and as satirist and philosopher.

Mark Twain's popularity with the Russians is exceeded only by Jack London's. No foreign author can touch London in Russia—not even Victor Hugo, whose books have been translated into forty of the languages of the peoples of the USSR. Richard Henry Little has given a vivid account of what Jack London meant to Russians during the revolution: "Never was an author so idolized as Jack London is among the Russians. Apparently all his works have been translated into Russian. And I found them everywhere. Officers passed them around from one to another, and I often have seen little groups of soldiers sitting in the woods, while the man who could read was doing so aloud to the eager delight of the awestruck group around him. At every mess the officers wanted me to tell them all I knew about Jack London."

Lenin himself shared the soldiers' interest, and when he was slowly dying his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, read Jack London's stories to him. He did not like everything she read, Krupskaya relates. London the teller of stories intrigued Lenin; London the social critic bored him. The majority of Russian readers have felt the same way. "Martin Eden," "The Sea Wolf," and "White Fang" are more popular

(*Continued on page* 45)



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# The Story of Ezra's Tower

*THIEVES IN THE NIGHT. By Arthur Koestler. New York: The Macmillan Co.* 1946. 357 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

FOR once response has not failed a man who writes books. Within a period of five or six years Arthur Koestler has come to be widely acknowledged as one of the most interesting, most eloquent, and most forceful of contemporary authors. Recently it was reported that his anti-Stalinist writings, published in France only this year, had a certain influence on the election returns—a rare compliment, even if based on mere hearsay, for a writer who is predominantly a novelist. Perhaps his newest novel—a story about Jews in Palestine from 1937 to 1939—will have similar long-range effects. Its immediate political response can be expected to be fiercely controversial.

This is the first of Mr. Koestler's stories in which the protagonist arrives at a clear-cut, active decision. Faced by the choice between revolt and endless injustice, the hero of "Thieves in the Night" throws in his lot with the revolutionaries, and he does it without any of the reservations that have so often marked disillusioned Koestlerian figures. However, mid-twentieth-century revolution is no longer a romantic affair; whatever its ends, its terrorist methods are in no way distinct from those of nascent crypto-fascism. And as if to spite the squeamish among his readers, the author, in depicting the catacomb discipline of the Jewish extremists, stresses that connotation.

To Joseph, his hero, organized violence has a peculiar meaning. "Fifteen hundred years of impotent anger have gnawed our intestines," he says, "sharpened our features and turned down the corners of our lips." To get hanged singing the anthem appears as "a luxury" to his despair. As can be seen—and this, I submit, is a dangerous thing to do in a pioneers' story—Joseph is an intellectual.

He is an upper-class English-born half-Jew, and has been driven into the awareness of his being a Jew only by a deeply embarrassing personal experience. When the reader meets him first, he has long since joined a group of men and women immigrants uniting "the fervor of a religious order with the imagination of a socialist debating club," has undergone their hard, ascetic training, and learned to talk Hebrew and nothing but Hebrew.

That group, then, sets out to take possession of the land which, legally purchased by the Jewish National Fund, is destined to become their self-sustaining, communal settlement —Ezra's Tower. The Arabs have always called it the Hill of the Dogs. As the author proceeds to tell of the struggle on the hill's arid soil, carried on in hostile surroundings under the half-hearted protection of the Mandate authorities, he frequently leaves the general path of fiction: not without ulterior motives he shows in detail the working of a community built on socialist lines yet untouched by totalitarianism; and he also gives what, pieced together, amounts to a history of the Zionist experiment. Mr. Koestler cannot help writing well. Yet more effectively than in those narrative pages the ideals and ills, the joys and trials of Zionist youth are mirrored in the mutual conflicts on Ezra's Tower, and through the great, burning conflict (still in its infancy in the late thirties) within every single one of the pioneers, the "few, the happy few" of millions already engulfed by the threat of annihilation: endurance, resignation—or terror resistance.

Still in their infancy, too, are the ill-famed White Paper and illegal immigration following in its wake. Joseph happens to attend the trial in court of a number of these trespassers. He is—how could it be otherwise?—stirred to his depths. But his final decision is brought about, as was his first, by personal tragedy. This is a superb weakness of the novel, and accounts for some of the most beautiful passages to be found in Koestler's entire work. The comrade Joseph cares most for in the colony is Dina, a lovely refugee girl who "cannot bear to be touched"; the Nazis had tortured—and perhaps also violated her—before she escaped to the Promised Land. And one night the Arabs of Kfar Tabiyeh, the village nearby, kill her. Why? "We want to be left alone," says one of the Moslem dignitaries, a man of moderate persuasion, on another, less blood-stained occasion, "we want to live our own way, and we want no foreign teachers and no foreign money and no foreign habits . . . and no shameless women with wriggling buttocks in our holy places."

Mr. Koestler tries not to wrong the Arabs of Palestine. He is thoroughly familiar with their semi-medieval fanaticism and their modern shrewdness. He also attempts to do justice to the British, or rather the English suburbanites to whom the Empire seems to have turned over its colonial administration; he understands their resentful *gêne* in face of the phenomenon of "white natives." It must be recalled that this is 1939, and British tear-gas attacks on the pitiful remnants of European Jewry at Palestine's doorsteps are still in the future. Writing without a gleam of hindsight, the author even lends some grim humor to his Occidental characters. Nowhere does he succeed better in doing so than in the discussion of the assistant chief commissioner with a delightfully uninhibited American newspaperman — which, incidentally, will remind many readers of the famous dialogue, between Enver Pasha and the German pastor in the late Franz Werfel's "The Forty Days of the Musa Dagh." As far as Mr. Koestler's political, or topical, subject goes, that scene, a perfect piece of drama, is the climax of his book.

What is its message? That terror alone is the answer to the Palestinian problem? Or going a step further—as the level of Koestler's writing suggests —that terror alone can right wrongs anywhere? In an article published some weeks ago in *The New York Times Magazine* on the Jewish question the same author was less radical. Perhaps we thus have to take his present book merely as the story of Joseph, a Jew. But Arthur Koestler tells that story with so much credibility and such force of conviction that Joseph's decision cannot but assume a monitory character. "Thieves in the Night" is a bewildering book. It is a magnificent novel.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 657)

G. W. CURTIS:
*FROM THE EASY CHAIR*
("The American Girl"
published in 1893)

An English commentator says: "American girls have shown they can receive, travel, and live without chaperons . . . or husbands, and are fast developing an . . . intelligent, self-reliant, courageous, and refreshing variety of the human race."



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# Mr. Marquand's Sound Wine

*B. F.'s DAUGHTER. By John P. Marquand. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1946. 439 pp. $2.75.*

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

AT the time of the publication of "The Late George Apley" there was current an anecdote which offered implications beyond its humor: a glacial old gentleman in a Beacon Hill club was asked if he had read John Marquand's new book. "My dear fellow," he replied testily, "I *am* George Apley!" I considered this an improbable story until I had occasion to spend an evening in the company of a man who so closely approximated H. M. Pulham, Esq., that his conversation gave the effect of quotation. The book had lately reached the stalls, was being reviewed and discussed, and my reference to it, while no doubt compulsive, at least bore the *visa* of relevance. He not only told me that he had read it with pleasure and a sense of recognition, but spontaneously admitted that much of his life and many of his attitudes were prototypical. His candor was so coated with complacency that he somehow managed to imply that to find oneself in a Marquand novel was equivalent to being listed in the Social Register.

This lack of resentment on the part of Mr. Marquand's quarry is not hard to explain. Chief among the reasons is the fact that his irony springs from disapproval rather than contempt. And it must be remembered that he has chosen to write mainly of people of position and privilege, people who are widely envied and are aware of that envy, that he uses a finesse which is one of the rituals of their living, and that he is not a man given to raising his voice. He may, and does, disclose the spiritual poverty of their lives, but at least, in solace, he leaves them their status.

His ability to disrobe his victims without too greatly embarrassing them, to allow them, like the Dean in the limerick, to keep the old school tie on, has provoked the criticism that Marquand's irony is too often feathered with courtesy, that he dislikes to draw blood. He has, it seems to me, the chiropractor's attitude toward dissective surgery, and the undercurrent of respect for the characters over whom he so eloquently grieves gives his work a tempered objectivity which is close to identification. He believes in correction by manipulation rather than assault, because it is his wish to leave the body improved, certainly, but undisfigured and essentially intact.

In only one sense is "B. F.'s Daughter" a departure from the author's previous anamneses. It is his first novel in which the protagonist is a woman. Polly Fulton, discontented daughter of an engaging, self-made industrialist, is shown in clear detail under Mr. Marquand's expert lighting effects, and is evidence that he can be as effective and intuitive upon joining the ladies as he is over the walnuts and port.

For Burt Fulton's girl all the money and finishing schools were not enough to erase the impact of a word flung at her in childhood:

> "We don't want you," Susy had said, "because you're just rich, rich, rich."
>
> It would have been less painful if Susy had told her she was too dumb or not attractive enough. It would have been much better if she had refrained from arguing, but instead she had asked Susy why, since Susy was pretty rich herself.
>
> "But we're not *nouveau,*" Susy said, and she raised her eyebrows in a precocious manner, "not *nouveau.*"

Years later Tom Brett, the thinking reed whom Polly had intransigeantly married, was to tell her that "nobody cares what happens to a girl if she's on a yacht." She had believed herself in love with Bob Tasmin, a custom-made young lawyer she had known since childhood, and who always said and did the right things, but when B. F., the beloved antagonist, approved of the engagement she ended it to clutch at the untidy antithesis which was Tom Brett.

The war and B. F.'s death found Polly in a state of spiritual dishevelment at 34, with Brett in full flight from her sponsorship and on his way to becoming a Liberal bureaucrat. As Winifred James, the commonplace little secretary who comforted Tom in the small house in Georgetown, said to Polly: "Once he said that he was the boy in the toy store and that you would buy him an electric train when all he wanted was marbles."

After that, when Bob Tasmin, carefully saying the right things, called her attention to the existence of his wife and small son as taking precedence over his love for her, B. F.'s daughter, a rich young woman with nothing to buy, began to face the sort of bankruptcy which had so long awaited her.

I believe that it bears out my original thesis when I say that Mr. Marquand has made Bob Tasmin a double agent. Inasmuch as he is presented as ritualistic, traditional, and correct, he is a familiar Marquandian puppet. It is Tasmin's observance of Groton's Law which enables the author to attack the things which he hates best. Through Polly Fulton he can, as ventriloquist, assail the scarecrow in the Brooks suit, but it is clearly and only Marquand who finally presents Robert Tasmin as the sibyl and the ultimate hero.

With the exception of Ouerbach, a somewhat maudlin radio commentator, who seemed out of focus, the rest of the characters are drawn with Mr. Marquand's admirable finish and clarity, and the Washington scenes are proof that he is by no means bounded by geography. "B. F's Daughter" is a good Marquand, a sound wine in a bad year and recommended to all those who like their satire to have *bouquet.* The ones who insist that a sword be used against our time will, I suppose, complain that, while Mr. Marquand continues to mold wax figures which are living likenesses, he is still content only to indicate with his pen the places where the lethal pins are to be driven.

**John P Marquand "is content only to indicate with his pen the places where the lethal pins are to be driven."**

## *Post-Mortem*

By Alfred Kreymborg

SCHUBERT had a dime when he died:
Very little, someone sighed:

Not enough for a proper coffin,
Not enough for a common shroud:
How can we do without a preacher
And the undertaker crowd?

Someone else beside the dead
And immortal bird replied:

Here's his body lifting ours
Through the disembodied air.
There's no money in the music
But the lark's a millionaire!



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# As Miss Perkins Remembers Him

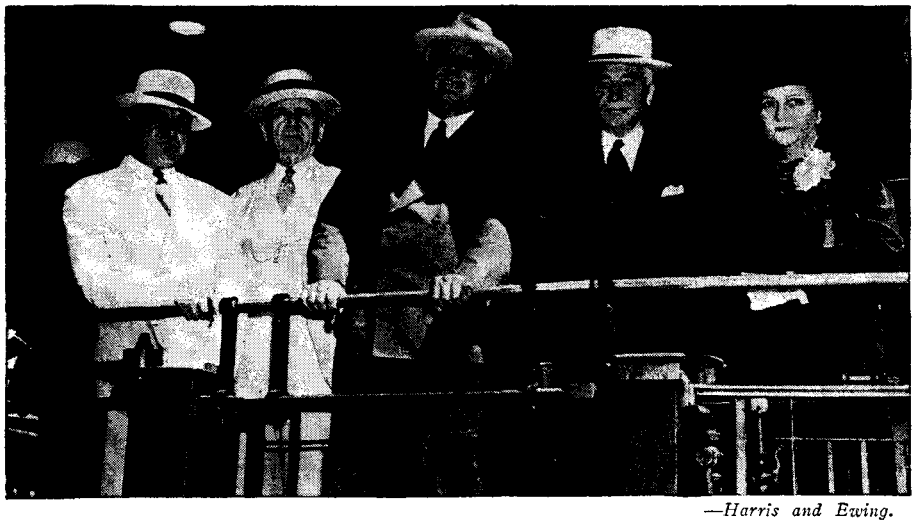
*THE ROOSEVELT I KNEW. By Frances Perkins. New York: The Viking Press.* 1946. 396 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ERNEST K. LINDLEY

AMONG the survivors of Franklin D. Roosevelt's entourage, Frances Perkins is one of the four to eight who had the fullest opportunity to know his mind, character, purposes, and methods. The others are Mrs. Roosevelt, Samuel I. Rosenman, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and, possibly, Frank C. Walker and three constant members of his White House staff: Vice Admiral Ross T. McIntire, his physician, Stephen Early, his press secretary, and Grace Tully, his personal secretary.

Miss Perkins never was, and never was a mature woman who had been a public personage herself for nearly twenty years and a respected public official for ten. She remembered him, rather unfavorably, as a green State Senator. She saw him develop. She knew when and where he got many of his ideas. She had probed him and learned how to work with him before he entered the White House.

This is, first of all, a study of Roosevelt. He was not a simple man. Miss Perkins calls him "the most complicated human being I ever knew." She illuminates with anecdotes and accounts of conversations scores of the facets of his character, including what she bluntly calls his "almost childish vanity" about many things, including



—*Harris and Ewing.*

A welcome home to the "Chief." Frances Perkins "was the only person who served in his Cabinet from his inauguration as Governor of New York until his death."

sought to become, so intimate a general adviser to Roosevelt as Louis Howe, Harry Hopkins, Rosenman, and the various brain-trusters and less brainy palace-guardsmen who came and went. But for more than 16 years she was one of his loyal associates. She was the only person who served continuously in his cabinet from his inauguration as Governor of New York until his death. She also became his warm friend, as well as Mrs. Roosevelt's.

Given her opportunity, two questions remain: Was she a discerning observer? Is she candid? On the evidence of this book, the answer to both questions must be "yes": a flat "yes" to the first, and a "yes" without serious reservations to the second.

Miss Perkins is, as she says in her foreword, "bound to him by ties of affection, common purpose, and joint undertaking." But her attitude toward him was never worshipful. When her career was joined to his she misunderstanding and that he had weighed every factor. Then, when he said "yes," she knew that she could go ahead. When the plan took detailed form and she was ready to move, she refreshed his memory of his decision, point by point and got a final "okay."

Many of Roosevelt's lieutenants didn't work that way. They deliberately told him only what they thought would elicit a vague assent.

"They would," as Miss Perkins states, "take their chances on being stopped elsewhere, and they were perfectly willing to embarrass him for the sake of getting their own view over."

Others made the mistake of overestimating Roosevelt's knowledge. He had a quick intelligence but his mind was not intellectual, in the sense that word is ordinarily used. He "did not enjoy debate and argument based on principles of logic." His "imagination and sympathy entered into every subject he had to think about." He absorbed information on an immense array of subjects. But there were, to the end, big blank spaces in his knowledge. One of them was economic theory. The subject bored him.

In addition to being a study of Roosevelt, this book is also an informal, inside-ish report about the parts of the New Deal with which Miss Perkins was directly concerned and a brief survey of the influences and circumstances which shaped both Roosevelt and herself. One gets the feeling that Miss Perkins would have liked to write at greater length on these subjects, but was prevailed upon to make her first objective the production of a highly readable book. In passing, she throws new light on a dozen controverted questions, from the causes of the split between Roosevelt and Al Smith to Mrs. Roosevelt's role during her husband's years in the White House.

Miss Perkins reveals also, unostentatiously and without any signs of feeling defensive about it, her own place in the New Deal. She was the chief architect of the social insurance program. She believes—I think correctly—that Roosevelt regarded this "as the cornerstone of his administration" and "took greater satisfaction from it than from anything else he achieved on the domestic front." She regrets that the Social Security Act was not made more comprehensive and that unemployment insurance was not put on a Federal basis in the first instance. She also bore major responsibilities for the wage-and-hour act, the operation of Section 7A of NIRA, and the launching of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.

his "exploits in teasing Winston Churchill and in making Stalin laugh and unbend."

Her appraisals of Roosevelt refine many of those published by other close and trustworthy observers. When she enters a dissenting verdict, she explains why, and shows that she understands how others reached a different conclusion. For example, Roosevelt was reputed to have the habit of "running out" on his subordinates. Miss Perkins reports that she never had that experience. She says: "It is my final testimony that he *never let me down.*" (This is the only italicized conclusion in her book.) When she wanted a policy decision from him, she prepared an outline of not over two pages. She went over it with him, point by point. She presented the objections, too, and told him what kind of political opposition might be expected. When he gave his assent, she then went over the proposal again, point by point, to be sure that there was no



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Miss Perkins came to Washington to help Roosevelt develop his social program. Her main work was done when the wage-and-hour act went on the books in 1938. After that, she wanted to leave. But the President could never bring himself to let her go. Between the lines of this book, it is easy to see why. She was trustworthy.

Miss Perkins does not state in her foreword to what extent she is relying on written records. She has informed this reviewer that she kept no diary, but did jot down notes or dictate memoranda on conversations and incidents which struck her as being especially interesting and important. For the rest, she is relying on memory and her official records. There may be slight errors here and there, but she is a conscientious and reliable witness. She creates confidence also by withholding judgments on situations on which she was not fully informed at first hand, especially in the field of international relations.

This book is only a sample of what Miss Perkins knows about Roosevelt and his Administration. She should take the time now to put on paper more of the valuable material which she has in her notes and in her mind. As she says, it will be years before a definitive history of the Roosevelt Administration will be written. But her analysis of Roosevelt the man is the most penetrating that has been written and is destined, one suspects, to be regarded with deep respect by future historians.

# Representation Is the Question

*THE GREAT DILEMMA OF WORLD ORGANIZATION. By Fremont Rider. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock.* 1946. 85 *pp.* $1.50.

Reviewed by GRENVILLE CLARK

TWO great questions face those who advocate the transformation of the United Nations into a limited world government. The first is how to constitute a world legislative assembly upon so equitable and practical a basis that the nations will consent to delegate to it the minimum powers necessary to prevent war. The other, closely interrelated, concerns the precise powers to be granted to such a world legislature.

In this short volume, Dr. Rider, librarian of Wesleyan University, comes to grips with the first of these issues —the problem of a fair and workable plan for the allotment of representatives.

The author proposes a single criterion: "The relative sum total of the educational accomplishment of all the citizens of each country." As a means of measurement, he then sets forth an ingenious plan for weighing the "accomplishment" in terms of years of study by the literate population of each nation. Thus, he estimates an average educational period for the adult literates of the United States of about nine years, which translates into a total of 706 million "educational years" for our whole population.

Dr. Rider would allot representation *exclusively* upon such a calculation applied to all the member countries participating in the world government, with the proviso that every country shall have "at least one representative, even if only fractionally entitled to one." He assumes that the new World Assembly should have 400 members, subject to adjustment to permit this minimum representation for the most backward countries.

An illustrative table demonstrates that by this process a World Assembly comprising all the nations would number 424, representing an estimated world population of 2,237 millions, of whom 525 millions are assumed to be "adult literates."

Of this book it must be said that it has the great merit of clear diagnosis and the added merit of willingness to submit a concrete remedy instead of dealing in the tiresome generalities by which too many writers on world government avoid contact with its most thorny problems. On the other hand, the particular remedy recommended by the author has quite plainly little or no relation to the practical facts of the current world situation. This is sufficiently shown by the fact that while under Dr. Rider's formula eighty-eight representatives are allotted to the United States, only fifty-nine are allotted to Russia and only forty-nine to the whole British Commonwealth and Empire.

If there is anything clear in this immensely difficult field, it is that, at least to start with, the representation of the Big Three (the British Commonwealth and Empire being treated as a whole) must be absolutely equal.

Certainly in view of the number and vigor of Russia's population, together with her vast extent and potential productive capacity, nothing could be more impractical than a proposal that Russia should now have a representation of one-third less than the United States. As to the British position, Mr. Churchill's words in the House of Commons in May 1944 furnish the key: "Taking everything into consideration, . . . we [the whole Commonwealth and Empire] can claim to be the equals of these great powers [Russia and the United States] but not, in my view, superior." As regards the United States, it will hardly be suggested that it should have less representation than the other two.

With these considerations in mind, the Petition for Amendment of the

—*Werner in* The Chicago Sun.

**Which?**



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U. N. Charter that resulted from the Dublin Conference of October 1945 proposed the equal allotment of sixty-five representatives to each of the Big Three. Time and reflection confirm the practical wisdom of that carefully considered proposal, which is not discussed or even mentioned in this book.

Beyond this, Dr. Rider's formula is highly oversimplified. He dismisses rather cavalierly the practicability of weighing such factors as natural and industrial resources. And here again he gives the impression of having given little consideration to, or even of being ignorant of, other thought in this field, such as the solid writings of Professor Herbert F. Rudd, Dr. Louis B. Sohn, and others.

It is the belief of this reviewer that when this key problem of world order is solved (as solved it must and will be), the formula of representation, rather than being tied to any single factor, will embody a synthesis of several elements and will, moreover, necessarily reflect the current strength, physical and moral, of the great powers.

Notwithstanding its deficiencies, no serious student of world organization should fail to read this book. It states clearly the hopeless inadequacy of the present Charter. It defines with clarity the problems to be met. Even its special remedy, however partial and defective, is a worth-while contribution to the growing stream of thought from which, soon or late, a true World Legislature will be evolved.

# What Is the Crime of War?

*HIROSHIMA. By John Hersey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.* 1946. 118 *pp.* $1.75.

Reviewed by LOUIS RIDENOUR

JOHN HERSEY'S "Hiroshima" has been described as the war's greatest piece of reporting; certainly it has been one of the most widely read. It first appeared in *The New Yorker*, which devoted to it the entire editorial space of one issue. Since then it has been widely reprinted, and appears now in book form.

"Hiroshima" is an intimate and moving account of the disaster that befell the first city to wither under the explosion of an atomic bomb. The story is told in terms of an immediate experience of six people who survived —a German monk, a doctor who maintained a private sanitarium, an office girl, a war widow with two children, a medical student, and a Japanese Protestant clergyman. By this device, the catastrophe is presented in terms of happenings to individuals, which the individual reader can appreciate and comprehend, rather than in terms of the numbing over-all figures that submerge and include the inconvenience, impoverishment, pain, maiming, and death of hordes of individuals. Hersey keeps the tragedy of Hiroshima in focus as clearly as Tolstoy did the battles in "War and Peace" and by the same technique.

Hiroshima was a battle, of course. It was the final systematization of the war upon civilians that goes by the polite name of strategic bombardment. It was a battle between eleven men in a four-engined airplane and thirty thousand times that number of men, women, and children, on the ground.

Hersey draws no explicit morals in "Hiroshima"; he is concerned entirely with clear and objective reporting. It seems to me impossible for anyone to read "Hiroshima" without drawing morals for himself. I therefore here conclude the review of "Hiroshima" with the remark that everyone able to read should read it, and go on to speak of the morals that I feel should be drawn from this superb bit of reporting.

It is temptingly easy to distil, from a reading of "Hiroshima," the notion that the atomic bomb is an especially inhuman weapon of war, whose use should be outlawed by all nations. This view neglects the fact that the greatest loss of life occurring in a single air raid on Japan came on a night in 1945 when the B-29's attacking Tokyo in a low-altitude fire raid under favorable wind conditions got a ring of fire established in the city and burned up about a hundred thousand people trapped inside. Crews in the later waves of aircraft on that raid under favorable wind conditions smell of burning human flesh even two miles up. An old-fashioned chemical reaction—oxidation—can be as terrible in terms of human life as is the atomic bomb; it simply requires a greater effort of the attacker, for hundreds of aircraft must be used in place of one.

—*Boris Deutsch.*

**"What Atomic War Will Do to You," winner in Pepsi-Cola's 1946 Art Contest.**

At the next level of appreciation, the effectiveness of fire and old-time "high explosives" being admitted, one takes the view that the bombardment of civilians is a crime. But in a modern war, technology and production are the keynotes of success. Where is the difference between a soldier and a civilian? Four centuries ago, when military tools were simpler, some distinction could be drawn, and the difference was even better defined two thousand years ago. But today the fighting man is helpless without the complicated organism of a manufacturing civilization behind him. If a war can be terminated at a smaller cost in one's own lives by destroying the enemy's manufacturing organization instead of his soldiers and sailors, where is the moral principle that says that this is wrong?

At last we come to what I think must be remembered by all who cringe while reading "Hiroshima": the crime of war is war itself. The murder of one person is scarcely different from the murder of a hundred thousand; the distinction must be drawn between the murder of one person and no murder at all. The tools of murder, their effectiveness and cost, are of no moral interest; they have meaning only to those whose business it is to organize murder to be cheap and simple.

The message of "Hiroshima" is that war is a dirty business which man had best outgrow, and quickly. The facts that all the death described by Hersey was loosed by eleven men in a single airplane, that it came from the energy locked in the atomic nucleus, that only a pound of U235 reacted to produce it—these facts are of professional military interest to professional military men. They have only to do with the convenience, the economics, of murder. The crime is murder; any reader who rises from "Hiroshima" with the feeling that the atomic bomb is especially terrible has missed the point. The atomic bomb is especially *effective*, but the eighteen-inch sword of the Roman legions was just as terrible, in the moral sense, when it was used to kill men.



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Gertrude Stein: "Writers have two countries, one where they belong and one in which they live really. The second . . . is not real but it is really there."

# A Wonderchild for 72 Years

*SELECTED WRITINGS OF GERTRUDE STEIN. Edited by Carl Van Vechten. New York: Random House.* 1946. 622 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by LEO LERMAN

ONCE upon a time a child, Gertrude, was born in Alleghany, Pa., which later became Pittsburgh, U. S. A. And this child, Gertrude, was born in many places for seventy-two years—Vienna, Austria; Paris, France; Oakland and San Francisco, California; Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; Florence, Italy. She died on July 27, 1946 in Paris, France. But doubtlessly she had died in many places before. It is almost impossible to live without dying, and Gertrude lived all the time she was living. Now Gertrude was a wonderchild. She was a wonderchild in all the places in which she was born and died and lived, and she was a wonderchild in places in which she had never been and of which she had probably never heard. But they all heard of her because she was this wonderchild—oh yes. Most of all she was a wonderchild in Paris, France, where also in and about she went to live in 1903 and where she lived almost always. There and everywhere she was also an *enfant terrible*—meaning a bully. What she said went, because she knew that she knew. If you did not know that she knew, you went. She would brook no interference and not a no. Lots of people came and some stayed, but sooner or later almost everybody went. Of course, some came back. But with this child, who had the look of an ageless, very wise peasant woman, everything was forever, everything was permanent, everything was everything, but she was she and that meant she was first person singular always. Sometimes she was generous with her first person singular. But always she was so explicitly first person singular that you said yes—or else! Once she met a girl, Alice B. Toklas. She took her into her first person singular so completely that later she wrote "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," and many people read it because it became a best seller because many people read it. And almost everyone was delighted because it was quite easy to understand and so almost everyone understood it and they were pleased because now they could be among the initiate, too. There's nothing people like so much as to be among the initiate. But ever so many who read it said which is which—which is Gertrude, which is Alice B.? And some of them never did find out, nor did it matter. And she wrote it in six weeks because she had been her whole life preparing it, because a genuinely created and creative work does not spring out just like that but has to be simmering inside for years. And she bought herself a new eight-cylinder Ford car "and the most expensive coat made to order by Hermes and fitted by the man who makes horse covers for race horses, for Basket the white poodle and two collars studded for Basket. I had never made any money before in my life and I was most excited."

So the next year which was 1934 she came back to America because this was the year for her opera "Four Saints in Three Acts," and this was the year for her lecturing and seeing America and hearing it and inhaling it and not especially feeling it more than all those years in Paris, France, and elsewhere because she always felt it intensely. She always felt America. She was America. Meaning: she had an abiding sense of fun, she was an energist; she was the biggest, the best; she was an evangelist; she was all past but even more future. She was sentimental. She was real. She was decided. She was shrewd. And, of course, she was a wonderchild. That's America. That's being an American. She wrote all about being Americans in "The Making of Americans," which is enormous, almost one thousand pages, and there is quite a lot of it in these "Selected Writings of." She wrote all about being American in almost everything she wrote whether it was all about Picasso or Matisse or Melanctha Herbert (which last Richard Wright has called "the first long serious literary treatment of Negro life in the United States"). And when she wrote "Paris, France," she wrote:

> A child does not forget but other things happen . . . After all everybody, that is, everybody who writes is interested in living inside themselves in order to tell what is inside themselves. That is why writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really. The second one is romantic, it is separate from themselves, it is not real but it is really there.

And so this is all about Gertrude's first person singular again but this time it is all about everyone's dream world, everyone understanding, of course, that there are two dream worlds, both real, and the problem is to coincide them and then you are adjusted. Gertrude coincided her dream worlds: she was adjusted. She was so well adjusted that sometimes people couldn't stand it, and they tried, if they dared to maladjust her, but all they did was maladjust themselves. She was as incorruptible as Gibraltar, but stone is no longer impervious, so there is nothing to compare but herself to herself. No one could distract her from herself. Not even the Nazis could dislodge her from France and not even the G.I.'s could do anything except love her, so they did that. Everyone is interested in personality. She was personality. Everyone wants to partake of being alive, and the moment you heard of her or saw her you knew she was alive—living. Everyone wants to es-



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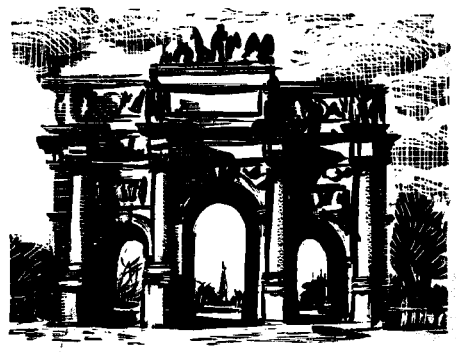
cape into a dream. She was living in a dream. She was truer than history, more like fiction. Fairytales are fiction, which means fiction and fairytales are dreams. E. M. Forster said it not thinking about her but saying it and it is about her, because she was never as dim as most people are dim in "real" life. ". . . fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond the evidence. . . ." Thomas Wolfe said it all exactly about her. He, too, was not saying it about her, but there is nothing better said about her. He said:

> There are some people who have the quality of richness and joy in them and they communicate it to everything they touch. It is first of all a physical quality; then it is a quality of the spirit. . . . It is probably the richest resource of the spirit; it is better than all formal learning, and it cannot be learned, although it grows in power and richness with living. It is full of wisdom and repose, since the memory and contrast of pain and labor are in it. . . . People who have this energy of joy and delight draw other people to them as bees are drawn to ripe plums. Most people have little power for living in themselves, they are pallid and uncertain in their thoughts and feelings, and they think they can derive the strength, the richness, and the character they lack from one of these vital and decisive people.

So this source of strength, this deep well of wisdom, this grandmother was a wonderchild for seventy-two years, an authentic wonderchild. That meant she was a prodigy and she behaved accordingly and was fawned upon and never fawned. And in Paris she met and stopped meeting and met again all the great because she was she and they were great and she made them great. Paris just before 1914 and until 1938 or so was the place to meet and be great, so it was obviously the place for her to be great and American and a catalytic agent. Even people who have never heard of genius are its heirs. Then there are the ones she influenced or circumscribed directly—the ones who sat around her in her beautiful rooms, the ones who wrote because she was and the ones who painted because she was. And on and off they included all the bright young men. There was Hemingway with whom "she quarreled," and to whom she once said something like, "Remarks are not criticism, Ernest." And there was Picasso. But almost from the first there was Picasso and they were two *enfants terribles*, and they got on famously even when they did not get on and together, between them they practically invented today in literature and painting. So she opened doors with what she wrote and



with what she said, and she did this for years. And sometimes she could go on materially because she had "independent means." This variety of means is most important, and fortunately for all people she had them. It's fortunate for all people because when a door is opened somewhere in the universe everyone passes through whether he knows it or not and whether its sooner or later.

Now sometimes Gertrude, the wonderchild, spoke right out and it was lucid. Everyone understood immediately. But sometimes she sang away more for herself than for others. She made up rhythms and said words, holding them up individually—beautiful pebbles found accidentally on some obscure beach—even the most populated shore is obscure to eyes which do not see. So when she sang or said:

> Sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
> Susie Asado.

or:

> Pigeons on the grass alas.
> Pigeons on the grass alas.
> Short longer grass short longer shorter yellow grass. Pigeons large pigeons on the shorter longer longer yellow grass alas pigeons on the grass
> If they were not pigeons what were they.

Lots laughed and laughed and said, "It's a joke! It's a racket! [Sinclair Lewis said that] She's crazy!" But some could see with their ears and smell with their eyes and taste with their whole selves. And they knew what she was saying and that it was important. What she had to say was: examine language—take up words as you would beautiful objects. Look at words. Listen to words. Have they shape, color? What do they say without context? Do you see these words. Words are words. But some people never knew what she was talking about, and, of course, sometimes they couldn't have known because when a child makes up songs or phrases you can't know what he's talking about all the time even if the child's a prodigy. Children speak a shorthand all their own. They lead curious and elaborately real interior lives. There were things published which probably shouldn't have been published until a definitive edition. But after all it's because she was difficult that everyone eventually came to hear about her.

So now she has departed but she is here and everyone who writes must be more explicit because of her writing both intelligibly and unintelligibly. And now she is historical in "Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein." All wonderchildren love publicity and to be immortalized because they know that they deserve it—who else does? So she was very pleased when she knew that this "Selected Writings of" was happening, and she wrote to Carl Van Vechten who was doing it. "I always wanted to be historical, from almost a baby on, I felt that way about it, and Carl was one of the earliest ones that made me be certain that I was going to be." And she is. But more than historical or a force or a catalytic agent or a wonderchild or a grandmother or a semanticist or an experimental writer or a publicist, or a woman, she was a philosopher being faithful to herself. William James, it is said, considered her his most brilliant pupil. And, after all, he was one of the founders of pragmatism. She studied medicine for four years at Johns Hopkins. She believed in continuity, and that everything was everything all the time. And she believed that she would inevitably get what she wanted. She did. She wanted people to see, especially to see her way. Captain Edmund Geisler, her escort on her venture into Belgium at the end of this last war, said to Carl Van Vechten, "Whenever she spoke she was frank and even belligerent. She made the G.I.'s awfully mad, but she also made them think and many ended in agreement with her." And that's about it: she made many mad and many thought her ridiculous and a phony, but she made everyone, with any sense, think. Now, I have written all about "Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein" and all the writings of Gertrude Stein this way because to write about her means to enter right into her first person singular. This is not a formal criticism nor a parody, but it is about the "Selected Writings of" which Carl Van Vechten edited so lovingly and to which he wrote such interesting notes and from which he omitted "Paris, France" and the whole book of "Picasso" both of which I love. Now "Picasso" is a real omission because it says more about art and artists than any other document I know and it says it irrefutably in fifty pages. But as Gertrude wrote in her little note, "And now I am pleased here are the selected writings and naturally I wanted more, but I do and can say that all that are here are those that I wanted the most, thanks and thanks again."



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# Christopher Marlowe, with Poetry

*THE MUSES' DARLING. By Charles Norman. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1946. 272 pp. $4.*

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THE great and shadowy figure of Christopher Marlowe has fascinated many readers and writers, scholars and amateurs alike. All that we know of his life is to be found in a few legal documents, while we know nothing of his appearance, for there is neither contemporary description nor portrait to perpetuate his likeness. That he died of a dagger thrust at the age of twenty-nine is a matter of record, but the exact manner of his killing, and what interests may have moved behind the act, are still subjects for speculation. And as it was with his dying, so it was with his living. His poet's claim upon our abiding interest has been seconded by the claim that mystery always makes upon curiosity; a double pressure not to be resisted. Mr. Charles Norman has been yielding to it for some twenty-odd years, and the present volume is the matured fruit of his far from passive surrender.

His debt to the scholarship of others —Hotson and Eccles and the rest—is fully acknowledged, but what he has made of that scholarship is his own, by virtue of understanding and the ability to express understanding in evocative, satisfying prose. "The Muses' Darling" is a work of literary distinction: a book with a style. It is a documented book, into which the kind of fiction dear to certain biographers has not been allowed to enter; but at the same time the author has managed to put a little imagined flesh on the bare bones of fact. He does this successfully and legitimately in such passages as those which describe Alleyn's performance as Faustus at the Rose Theatre, Robert Greene's filthy but literary death-bed, and the arrest and torture of Thomas Kyd. He gives life and color to his scene by calling on Dekker to assist him in picturing Elizabeth's London; and he has widened and deepened the interest of his study by reaching out to give "occasionally full accounts of his [Marlowe's] acquaintances," in accordance with a "plan, which was to throw light on his life by showing how his familiars lived, whenever the records dealing exclusively with him seemed inadequate." The plan was well conceived and has been well executed. Mr. Norman has not only assembled and arranged every scrap of information regarding Marlowe that is extant, and weighed probabilities, but he has also put that information in a vitalizing setting of correlative fact.

Here, then, is just about as good a life of Marlowe as present knowledge permits. But the life, of course, would be nothing without the poetry; a fact that some scholars seem to forget. Mr. Norman, being a poet himself, does not forget it, nor does he permit us to do so. However obscure the biography, the poetry is plain to read, and the biographer reads it with us. The ways by which Marlowe journeyed from Canterbury to Deptford are dark, but the development of the poet as poet is clear, and Mr. Norman traces it from the first translations of Ovid and the early tragedy of "Dido," through "Tamburlaine" and "Faustus," to "Edward II"; the last, according to this critic, being "the book with which Shakespeare went to school," the play in which Marlowe first displayed complete mastery of the dramatic medium, creating real characters rather than mighty puppets fitted to bear the weight of their maker's mighty line.

Among other things, Mr. Norman understands the art of quotation: enough but not too much. And, as quotation stirs the reader's memory, the echoes that cluster in its train move the biographer-critic to his greatest eloquence. I have said that "The Muses' Darling" is a book with a style. I should add that this style flexibly encompasses both factual statement and poetic imagery. So, writing of the Marlowe of "Tamburlaine," Mr. Norman declares: "Exultation rings the deep bell of his being. Like combers making toward the land, treading the offshore deeps with flashing, rhythmic thunder, the music of his marching iambics surges forward, thundering harmony to the shores of consciousness." And again:

> He is the true Elizabethan, voyaging on strange seas to mine the mines of beauty. And he is lost to us, lost in the corridors of the years, as one is lost who, turning his back in a corridor of mirrors before we have seen his face, is lost to sight, then reappears to stride silently in the deeps of glass, an image that recedes, yet in a fixed moment is forever there, so that we seem to hear, along the passageway, the fading footfall.

Yes, he is lost to us, while the plaguing questions remain. What did he look like? Whom did he love? How seriously did he take the atheism of which he was accused? What service caused Her Majesty's Government to intervene in his behalf at Cambridge? What were his relations with Shakespeare? Was Raleigh's figure, or another great one, behind Ingram Frizer's sudden thrust? These riddles and many more are still with us. But so is the poetry. And therefore, on balance, we may conclude with Charles Norman: "We know him so well and so little!"

This is the book that I shall give to anyone whose mind I wish to turn towards Christopher Marlowe; and, giving it, I shall remark that the well-chosen illustrations, including Ortelius's map of Africa, add much to the volume's interest and the pleasure that it affords.

—*From the book.*

**Alleyn as Faustus, Devil as Devil.**



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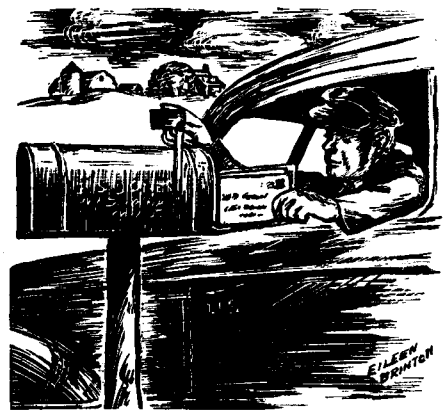
# Wholesome as New Bread

*GREEN GRASS OF WYOMING. By Mary O'Hara. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1946. 319 pp. $2.75.*

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY




READERS who loved "My Friend Flicka" and "Thunderhead" will welcome this third book about the McLaughlin family, their ranch, and their horses. Those who don't know the preceding volumes will hurry, as I did, to make up for lost time by finding and reading them. "Green Grass of Wyoming" takes up the story of this family when Ken, the younger of the two boys, is nearly seventeen. Thunderhead, the beautiful white stallion which, as a gangling colt, Ken had claimed as his own, is now on the range, a renegade four-year-old, free, wild, unmanageable. And, after the manner of range stallions, Thunderhead has started rounding up a harem, stealing mares from neighboring ranches, leading them off to his band in the sweeping plains and foothills. When a stallion starts poaching, the ranchers and farmers periodically go out and round up the wild horses and regain their lost property. Such a pursuit and capture is the central theme of Miss O'Hara's latest book.

Mr. Greenway, a wealthy breeder of horses, loses a valuable filly, Crown Jewel, which he has imported from England as a gift for his young niece Carey Marsh. Thunderhead is suspected of having abducted the mare, and the hunt is on. Miss O'Hara has written a powerful and enormously thrilling story against a background of panoramic sweep and color. Woven into the plot is a sensitive and tender theme of adolescent love—Ken's romance with Carey, who, with her dominating grandmother, is visiting the West for the first time.

The book is as wholesome and honest as new bread. It has that flavor of simplicity and unashamed idealism which pervades those stories written by an earlier woman novelist for another era than our own—"Little Women," "Little Men," "Jo's Boys." Miss O'Hara has none of Louisa Alcott's Victorian squeamishness nor her innocent unworldliness. What their work has in common is an essential soundness at the core, an emphasis on the dignity and beauty of human relationships, an essential *goodness*. Here the parallel ends—the sophisticated modern reader need not shy away. Miss O'Hara's book has incomparably more vigor and realism. The rough life on a ranch isn't prettied up. The facts of life are no secret to children brought up on a farm, surrounded by colts and calves and puppies and kittens; they know the difference between a stallion and the gentle gelding.

Miss O'Hara has given us an unforgettable picture of Thunderhead and his band, of their winter in the snows and blizzards of the range; how Jewel, the gently reared thoroughbred, grew tough and strong, and how she and her colt survived the hardships and the hazards of hungry wolves; how the stallion led his harem away from the following men of the round-up.

The story moves along with mounting suspense to a dramatic climax, and the happy solution as to what to do with the finally captured Thunderhead brings the book to a satisfying conclusion. It is a rewarding book, beautifully written, rich with what can be described without sentimentality as a love of nature, and a true understanding of that bond between a man and his horse. It can be safely said, I think, that Miss O'Hara's trilogy is well on its way toward becoming a classic; certainly "Green Grass of Wyoming," "Thunderhead," and "My Friend Flicka" will be read and loved by a great many people, and, because they have so fundamental and enduring an appeal, will never become dated or outworn.

# Italy in Revolution (Old Style)

*SEEDS IN THE WIND. By Francesco Jovine. Translated by Adrienne Foulke. New York: Roy Publishers. 1946. 305 pp. $3.*

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

ALL his publishers tell us about this new author is that he is an Italian, and that this is his first novel. It would be a fine novel in any case; as a beginner's offering it is a remarkable book. It has the kind of measured pace which does not hamper, or retard, the flow of action, but lends it its proper weight. Its style, rich and wiry at the same time, stands out as distinguished in what seems to be a first-rate translation. And although it is a historical novel, its characters still never appear to wear mere costumes; their lives are subject to the vicissitudes and trials of the period they happen to live in, but these people are led by "private" emotions.

Not before having put down this book did I realize that, as far as the main plot went, I had been reading a rather conventional story—the tale of the poor village boy and the squire's daughter. However, the place is the Kingdom of Naples, and the time the late 1850's, and therefore the happy ending of this particular boy-gets-girl story is by no means a foregone conclusion. That this is 1859 is the great chance of the boy Pietro Valeno: thrown into the turmoil of revolution, he has an opportunity to rescue Antonietta de Risio, his childhood playmate and love. Matured in battle, he casts off his serf's consciousness as, upon their return, he gravely confesses to the bewildered uncle of Antonietta's, "We are going to have a child." Old, then, as that tale may be, it has not frequently been told with more winning simplicity and a tact more subtle.

Nor have I any too often met in a novel a village priest as likably human as Don Matteo Tridone, Pietro's great friend. He is very poor, and his poverty brings him close to sinning time and again. He is far from being learned, and, lacking the right sense of ecclesiastical dignity, runs into any number of troubles. (There is a scene of Don Mateo's ride on his wilful ass which with its humor would not be out of place in Cervantes.) But he knows of the justice of God, and tries hard—not always, to be sure, to his own disadvantage—to help justice to its place on earth.

Around these three central figures Signor Jovine has gathered a large cast of characters—primitive peasants, the landed gentry, clerics, officers. Each one of them has his full dimensions, none is a mere episode.

Without being in the least didactic or "instructive," this author paints a valid picture of nineteenth-century southern Italy and her folk. Their essential traits have not changed as much as one might think since 1859—as readers who came to traverse that region in recent years were bound to notice with a nostalgic smile.



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# The Voice of a Thinker

*THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES. Vol. I. The Spell of Plato. Vol. II. The Hightide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath. By K. R. Popper. London: George Routledge & Sons.* 1946. 268 + 352 *pp.* $5.64.

Reviewed by JULIUS KRAFT

MANY among us pose as thinkers; actually they are technicians or charlatans. Few among us are thinkers—and those few are hardly able to make their voices heard over the noise created by the usurpers of philosophy, by those who in the words of Ralph Barton Perry "have trivialized philosophy." There exists today a conspiracy of superficiality and absurdity against philosophical sincerity, against clarity of thought about the most serious matters of life. That conspiracy, though very powerful, is, however, not all-powerful, and consequently is open to challenge by courageous outsiders. Of these outsiders, alas, there are not many, and even fewer are active. But sometimes one or another daring individual comes to the fore and saves the honor of philosophy. It is not too much to say that Mr. Popper is one of those daring individuals.

Popper demonstrated his outstanding philosophical talent a decade ago when, while still a teacher in a Viennese grammar school, he published his "Logik der Forschung (Logic of Research)," a fresh and stimulating approach to the involved philosophical problems connected with modern physics. However, as befits a true philosopher, Popper's interest has never been confined to the philosophy of natural science. Having lived through the social and political upheavals following the end of the First World War in Austria, England, and New Zealand, Popper has not closed his eyes in the face of the fundamental political problems posed by these historical events. On the contrary, he has most seriously striven for the new formulation and for the solution of these very problems. The result of his strivings towards this end is "The Open Society and Its Enemies."

The efforts which have produced this lively "critical introduction to the philosophy of politics and history" are remarkable indeed. They have led the author through a vast amount of source material embracing the period from Heraclitus up to the present time. But this exploration of sources has not been undertaken for the sake of historical scholarship, to say nothing of a historian's vanity. Its goal is rather the destruction of a specific vanity arising from an abuse of history which is incompatible with reasonable judgment in politics. For this vanity Popper uses the term "historicism," and he demonstrates that historicism is a poisonous ingredient in our intellectual heritage. "The Open Society and Its Enemies" is then devoted to the task of an intellectual purification, particularly in the political sphere. This formidable task is approached with a sincerity and originality of judgment seldom to be found in contemporary writing on political philosophy.

But what more specifically is "historicism" in Popper's sense and how far does he succeed in detecting it? Without going into technical details, this "historicism" could be described as a construction of arbitrary schemes of history. Theologico-metaphysical dicta about human history as a whole and sociological constructions of arbitrarily assumed "basic social trends" are characteristic forms of historicism. Historicism is used, as Popper shows, as an illegitimate method of treating political problems, and that illegitimate method is backed by the powerful authority of Plato, Hegel, and Marx. Popper demonstrates that Plato, Hegel, and Marx formulated ideas in political philosophy inimical to "The Open Society," *i.e.*, to a society based on reason and not on myth.

We are accustomed to regard Plato as the great founder of political ethics, as the philosopher of the just state. Popper's penetrating analysis of Plato's political theory shows that this approach to Plato is, to say the least, incomplete. It neglects the metaphysical mysticism in Plato's political theory which finds its expression in the application of the doctrine of ideas to the political realm. This application, which confuses scientific politics with a mystical doctrine about a "participation" of political history in an eternal realm of political "ideas," produces the historistic element of Plato's political philosophy, his myth of the origin and the destiny of the state. Popper distinguishes very fruitfully between realistic sociological achievements in Plato's political doctrine (foreshadowing Marx and Pareto) and its utopian elements (*e.g.*, its mathematico-metaphysical eugenics). The existence of the latter is a familiar fact. However, their logical link with Plato's historicism is for the first time systematically presented in Popper's lucid analysis.

This analysis mercilessly exposes the despotic character of the Platonic republic (as Kelsen did in his classical essay "The Platonic Justice"), and will, therefore, be shocking to many readers, particularly to those who have undergone the influence of neo-humanist or other eulogies of Plato. It must be shocking to them to follow Popper's painstaking account of the brutal political practices defended by Plato as demands of justice. Popper's charge that these practices are akin to fascism cannot be denied. It may be added that the revival of Platonic mysticism in Europe

"These *SRL* articles on the atomic bomb are making me nervous."



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by the circle of Stefan George, by philological and philosophical groups prepared, on a more sublime level, the ground for the less sublime mysticism of fascism. But Platonic mysticism is not the whole of Platonism. There remains, for example, a Platonic political wisdom which ought to be radically distinguished from untenable ideas confounded with it. This differentiation is a very necessary undertaking under present educational conditions in the Western world. Everywhere the call for "values," "integration," in short for cultural awareness as against cheap specialization, can now be heard. That call is basically legitimate. But if it is not carried out in a spirit critical of the tradition from which that cultural awareness is to be drawn, *e.g.*, of the tradition of Platonism, then the Western world will not experience a cultural revival but will suffer a cultural relapse, a relapse into a traditionalistic orthodoxy. A substantial number of false prophets work eagerly for such a relapse. To counteract the influence of these prophets a thoroughgoing study of Popper's Plato analysis is to be highly recommended.

But traditionalistic orthodoxy is not the only menace to our culture. The second volume of Popper's work is an extended treatment of Marxism and its "aftermath." Popper's incisive analysis succeeds completely in presenting the "method" and "prophecy" of Marxism as a form of historistic dogmatic on the origin and fate of "capitalism," the conceptual technique of which is taken over from the illogism of Hegel's dialectics. I know of no more radical and at the same time more detached criticism of Marxian ambiguous dogmatics than that contained in Popper's presentation. This criticism goes hand in hand with the highest admiration for Marx's service to social justice. In fact, Popper devotes a special chapter to Marx's ethics, a chapter full of challenge to historical materialists who are unaware of their historistic bondage.

The historistic belief in the saving power of the "class," the "state," the "nation," the "idea" is, as Popper shows, in its formal aspect, always a belief in certain "essences" endowed with magical qualities. This "essentialist" belief spoils our social and political judgment, particularly by diminishing or even denying the historical role of the individual in favor of invented entities. The destruction of historicism is then a prerequisite for maintaining the rights of the individual. In upholding these rights Popper joins forces with Hayek and Lippman without committing himself to economic non-interventionism. This unprejudiced defense of the individual and of his rights is one of the most urgent needs of Western civilization: it ought to be made a central topic of what might be called the counter-reformation of our civilization in its struggle against enslavement of the individual.

I cannot even try to give an account of the wealth of historical, philological, political, educational, and logical suggestions contained in Popper's work. The general reader will gain from it the benefit of increased clarity through following the text. For the more scholarly inclined the elaborated notes will offer an ideal opportunity for facing old and intricate philosophical problems in a new light. There will be disagreement between both kinds of readers and the author. But reading will never create frustration—a unique recommendation for a contemporary philosophical work.

The "revolt against reason" which Popper combats can simply not be quelled by a skeptical police with friendly intentions. It can be overcome only by a rediscovery of rational metaphysics. Without the guide of rational metaphysics even "historicism" cannot be fully understood. It cannot be rigidly analyzed as a confusion between religious ideas, history, and ethics. Kant spoke of "destiny" (a pet of historicism) as an illegitimate concept. But he did not exclude the concept of justice and even of God from the realm of reason. Today neither Plato nor Kant but Hegel, Nietzsche, and Kirkegaard help to satisfy the metaphysical hunger in the world. But the paradoxes offered by them are indigestible. They must create and have already created a fundamental confusion in thinking and feeling. Combatting that confusion, as Popper does in the field of political philosophy, is a service of utmost importance. It must, however, be combined with a courageous dismissal of metaphysical skepticism. Then politics can cease to be a field for magicians and technicians and the full power of reason will become available to "The Open Society."

# *Your Literary I.Q.*

By Howard Collins

ANTECEDENTS OF "IT"

Mrs. Royal Robbins, of Boston, offers 15 quotations each of which contains the pronoun "it." Do you remember what "it" is? Allowing 5 points for each correct identification and an additional 2 points if you can name either the poet or the poem, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 40.

1. Tonight it doth inherit the vasty hall of death.
2. It will carry and fetch, you can ride on its back, or lead it about with a string.
3. See! I shut it within thy sweet cold hand.
4. Behold it aforetime no eye ever did: so soon it forever from all eyes is hid.
5. It was a miracle of rare device.
6. Before thee stands revealed—its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed.
7. Close beside it grew the pine trees, green, the dark and gloomy pine trees, green, the pines with cones upon them.
8. It grew, a starlit flag unfurled! It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
9. In youth it sheltered me, and I'll protect it now.
10. It linked all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace.
11. Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting, the appetite may sicken, and so die.
12. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.
13. One word is too often profaned for me to profane it.
14. It was my heaven's extremest sphere, the pale which held that lovely dear.
15. It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself.



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# Strictly Personal

## HOME ON THE RANGE

THE last twenty years have seen strange things done in the name of literary criticism, but none stranger than the elevation of the detective story from the level of dime thriller to that of classic. "The detective story," says Joseph Wood Krutch, "is the one clearly defined *genre* of modern prose fiction impeccably classical in form." And Louise Bogan stuns opposition into silence by stating flatly that "continuous and sharp attention should be paid to this vehicle, in which every rejected and denied human impulse can be accommodated, from the petty but terrible *Schadenfreude* (joy in another's misfortune) bred from the poorer native qualities of the heart as well as the pressures of a competitive society, to the larger evil schemes of power and ambition." Thus encouraged, the professors are coming boldly into the open, and in many a survey course of English fiction "Trent's Last Case" and "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd" are being studied as devoutly as "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," and a good deal more enthusiastically. In the face of such a mustering of literary and academic authority he is a brave man indeed who dares to stand up and say that the "works" of such newly-created masters as E. C. Bentley, Dorothy Sayers, Agatha Christie, and their peers are no more than a succession of variations on the conventional thriller motifs of surprise, suspense, and blood.

The simple truth is this, that the exaltation of the detective story from the merely entertaining to the "significant" is the outcome of a colossal, possibly unintentional conspiracy on the part of the intelligentsia to justify its small-boy craving for the sensational. The unsophisticated member of society reads "Doc Savage" and "The Shadow"; the highbrow, in search of precisely the same thrill, reads R. Austin Freeman and Dorothy Sayers, who provide not only the essential corpses but a generous amount of camouflage in the form of treatises on chemistry and campanology. These, of course, are so arranged that they can easily be skipped. The argument that the solving of the crime poses a problem upon which the reader can test his deductive powers fools no one. At best, it puts the detective story in the same class as the anagram and the cross-word puzzle. These forms of mental stimulus no doubt have much to commend them, but no one has ever claimed that they are literature.

Let us, then, do away with hypocritical pretension and admit the truth. The detective story is basically the same today as it was in the days of Nick Carter, and satisfies the same demand. Attempts to treat it as an important contribution to literature cannot be considered seriously by anyone whose judgment has not been corrupted by his appetite for the sensational.

There is, however, a type of thriller, hitherto unhonored and unsung, which can justly lay claim to the distinctions that the detective story has usurped. Its readers are legion, but they are purposefully inarticulate; they scorn to weave fanciful theories to rationalize their taste. They can usually be identified by a nervous twitching of the trigger finger and an intense dislike of mutton. In the flesh they are nine times out of ten bald and paunchy and astigmatic, and their hands have rarely wielded a weapon deadlier than a garden hoe; but in spirit they are clear-eyed and lean and sinewy; and their six-guns spit lead with unerring precision as they vicariously scour the plains on the heels of the gang who have just held up the First National Bank.

Consider the claims of the Western. In blood and thrills it can match —nay, surpass—the detective story. But corpses are not enough. The great critics from Aristotle to Dr. Johnson have insisted that literature must have a Moral Purpose. Of this Moral Purpose there is not a trace in the detective story; but in the Western you can't get away from it. In the detective story men die for no other reason than to provide an exhibitionist an opportunity to display the power of his little gray cells

to the admiring moron who acts as stooge; in the Western they die because they've been trying to drive The Girl's gray-haired Dad from the range where his herds have grazed for thirty years, or because the Sheriff is cleaning up Red Gulch. Moreover, in the detective story, death, in the form of a paper knife between the ribs or a shot of strychnine in the *crêpes suzette*, sneaks up on a man when he isn't looking; but out on the plains the corpses wear their bullet holes in front, fair and square. They're dead, not only because they deserve to be, but because they were slow on the draw.

CONSIDER, in the two types, the treatment of sex. The women who figure in the detective story are usually a sorry lot—night club entertainers of dubious morality, faithless wives, blackmailing mistresses, and gold-diggers on the make. As likely as not they end up murderers or corpses before the story is finished, and serve them right. But there are no such women in the Western. In fact, there is only one woman, The Girl. And The Girl is a prairie flower—sometimes transplanted from the East—without flaw, either physical or moral, whose influence is in proportion to her perfection. At first she is a sister to all the men. After a while, to one man she becomes something more, but not, be assured, until the minister has pronounced them man and wife. And what about the Other Man? Does he spend sleepless nights devising fiendish schemes for the destruction of his successful rival? He does not. Instead, he spends a year's salary on a wedding present for the happy couple—a pair of silver-mounted six-guns or perhaps a twin saddle set with matching bridles. And then he rides away with a smile on his lips and a new wistfulness in the gray eyes that look steadfastly into distances.

Take your detective stories, you furtive seekers after sensation, who strive to conceal your appetite for blood under the camouflage of Art. As for us, we're hitting the trail into the sunset, a good horse between our knees, our guns bumping our thighs, the smell of sagebrush in our nostrils. And tonight, pard, when we bivouac 'neath the stars and the lonely coyote sings us to sleep, we'll close our eyes secure in the knowledge that when it's time to be heading for the Last Round-Up we'll go with a bullet-hole neat and clean from front to back. The other fellow may beat us to the draw, but he *won't* put arsenic in our coffee.

EDWARD A. MCCOURT.

*Mr. McCourt is a member of the English department at the University of Saskatchewan.*



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## CENSORSHIP AND BESTSELLERITIS

SEVERAL readers have written in to ask why we have been silent for so long in this space on the subject of book censorship. They point out that not since our fight with the U. S. Post Office over "Strange Fruit," and the Taft-Army wrangle, have we been concerned editorially with the theme of book banning. Meanwhile, all over the United States, particularly in Massachusetts and California, books are under attack in court suits brought by various self-appointed "decency" groups. In some regions, newspapers have been leading the drive in what appears to be a frank bid for the support of various pressure groups. In this connection, it is interesting to observe that the Hearst newspapers, in which the amount of space given over to vivid and forthright descriptions of complications relating to love and divorce is exceeded at times only by the space given over to photographs of ladies in their underwear and sometimes without their underwear — the Hearst newspapers have just about appropriated the campaign against books for their own and have emerged as the great defenders of the public's morals.

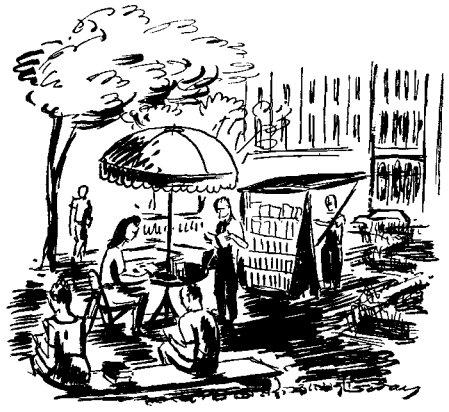
"How can you resist getting into the fight?" queries one reader. "This looks so much like your cut that it almost seems that there must be reasons for staying on the sidelines. Besides, think of the fun you could have with Mr. Hearst."

Our silence is of course no indication of consent. Behind it, however, was a real problem. In stating this problem, we wish to emphasize that we are not entirely certain that our position or policy in relation to it is the only correct one. We can be argued with; and we frankly seek the opinion of our readers.

Let us begin with a statement of principle. Censorship of books—whether on moral or political grounds—is a complicated and dangerous business. It is difficult, if not impossible, to codify a law against "obscenity" in such a way as to protect the public interest, whatever that may be, and yet guard against abuses of frivolous interpretation and over-application. A Pure-Food-and-Drug Law can operate under and through definite and standardized laboratory yardsticks. Any such equivalent for books—say a Pure-Word-and-Intent Law—must operate in an area where there is no standardization either of the product or the yardstick. Nor is it possible to draw up a list of words and situations as a sort of literary saliva test to determine which books should come under censorship and which should not. The same words, the same situations which seem objectionable and extraneous in one book may be legitimate and valid in the next. So far, we have not learned of any censorship group or agency able consistently to distinguish between the two.

This has been the position of *SRL* in every important fight involving book censorship since the magazine was founded twenty-two years ago. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to take that position effectively. Much of the dignity and high purpose which should go into the fight against book censorship are being weakened—not by the censors but by the book industry itself. What has happened is that too many authors and publishers seem to regard book censorship as a bonanza. Too many books seem deliberately calculated to reach the best-seller lists by way of the censor's ban. It is almost as though a ban or an attempted ban is the solitary justification for a book's existence. Too many books have become artless exhibits of erotica, cheap peep shows which attempt to be doubly alluring because of the attempt to ban them. The four-letter word has become big business.

Those who are sincerely interested in protecting literature against censorship must surely recognize that the biggest threat today is internal rather than external. The censor's job can be made so easy that dangerous precedents can be set everywhere that will be applied to an increasing number of books. And precedents have a way of being born in cement.



Hence the problem. What should our position be in relation to the eager offender who has one inviting eye on the censor and the other on the best-seller lists? Should we burst into print as though we had a *cause célèbre* on our hands? Should we rush forth, raising high the banner of the Bill of Rights and invoking the name of Milton and his famous Areopagitica? Should we maintain a running fire of editorials for every book aimed directly at the tongue-clacking market?

And if we failed to defend these books, what then? Isn't it necessary to fight against having precedents established or enlarged—however meretricious and tasteless the book under attack might be? Wouldn't we be false to our principles if we defended only those books we felt worth defending?

In asking ourselves these questions, we necessarily have had to supply some answers. Confronted by a case of attempted censorship involving a book which seems to us to suffer from an acute case of bestselleritis, we intend neither to disregard the case nor to attempt to build a holy literary crusade around it. What the censor wants is increased power. What that particular type of book wants is increased publicity. We shall try to deal with the censor by raising valid questions of principle. We shall try to deal with the book by supporting it quietly—in terms of legal briefs or statements rather than in published editorials. In terms of actual practice, this means we shall assiduously avoid raising any questions relating to the specific merits or demerits of the book under attack. We shall steer clear of any debates over specific words or passages. The only point we shall try to make is that there is no method of protecting the public against "obscenity" in books that is either workable or defensible, and that the inevitable abuses far outweigh any hypothetical gains. But we will make this point without merchandisable hoopla or fanfare.

If this position seems inadequate or incongruous, we can only say that it represents a serious attempt to find a way out of a dilemma—a dilemma which would never have existed if enough authors and publishers were concerned about their own long-range interests—if enough of them would really combat censorship instead of courting it.

N. C.



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Antidote to Poison

SIR: Mr. William Parker's letter (*SRL* Sept. 21) brought me to the point of writing to a magazine for, I believe, the first time in my life (except on matters of business). It was a very poignant letter and as I read along with entire sympathy I thought, "Ah, here is somebody who sees it all clearly. I shall read what he does about it and go and do likewise." But Mr. Parker let me down. He ended, as so much modern literature ends, in defeat.

I do not blame Mr. Parker for this. I can suggest no other course—if I could, I would follow it myself. But I wish Mr. Parker would *not* give up. Given, as he obviously is, the intelligence to examine life thoughtfully—and, with all apologies to Philip Wylie, to speak with less bombast and more sense than the author of "Generation of Vipers"—if Mr. Parker stayed with the problem just a little longer he might come up with at least the beginning of a solution. If all that comes out at first on his typewriter be putrefaction, let it come anyway and then burn it up. When it is all removed from his mind, who knows what might lie underneath? Perhaps I have more faith than Mr. Parker but I cannot help thinking of those miracles that have happened—infrequently, it's true—in history: the amazing, surprising godhood that is in man. I admit the manifestations of it at present are very rare and yet I have seen them, I have seen them. If Mr. Parker has not seen them he cannot of course write about it and I am sorry, because I believe Mr. Parker to be a good writer. And I do not believe that he thinks men are loathsome because if he did he would write about their loathsomeness without apology, and join the band whose work he and I decry.

LAURA NELSON BAKER.

Lake Mills, Iowa.

## "As He Saw It"

SIR: I have just read Jonathan Daniels's "review" of Elliott Roosevelt's "As He Saw It." It is a characteristic bit of contemporary journalism, and it has disappointingly little to say about the book. Elliott Roosevelt's basic thesis that Churchill was the villain of the piece is quite uncritically accepted by the reviewer, and it is consequently overlooked that the record shows conclusively that Churchill is the only leading statesman of our time who made specific proposals to modify national sovereignty.

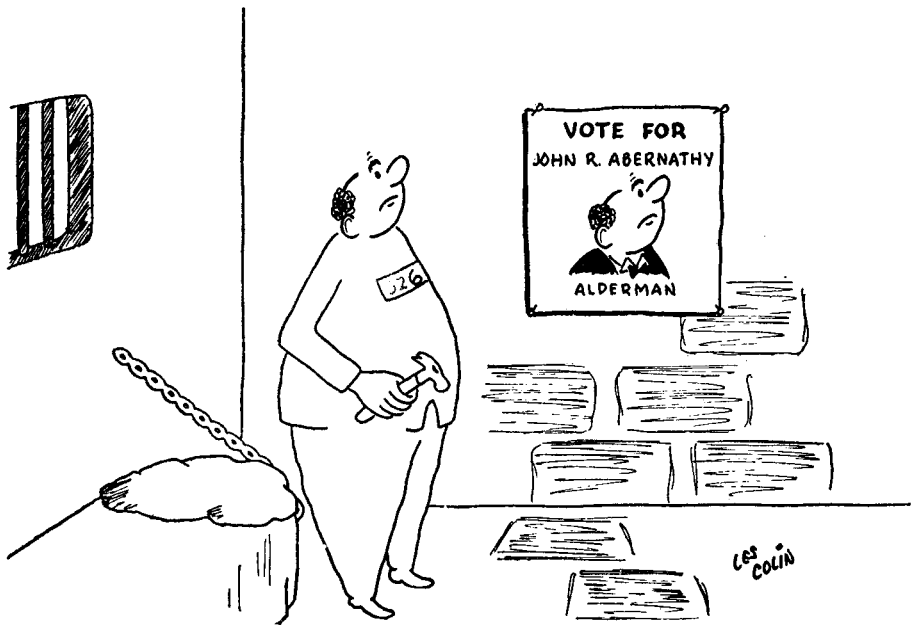
Fortunately we do not have to accept Elliott Roosevelt's "recollections" of these conversations as the only source material on F. D. R.-W. C. negotiations. Mr. Daniels sums up Elliott's story regarding the Atlantic Charter with its distinct effort to emphasize Roosevelt's concern for a constructive peace, and Churchill's drive to perpetuate the colonial imperialism of Britain, with the statement that Roosevelt "believed in the Atlantic Charter, which he shaped and which Churchill signed."

Sumner Welles has just published his interpretation of that story, and it includes the crucial *documents*. In his "Where Are We Heading?" he tells in detail of his experiences as the principal American drafting officer. "The initiative," Mr. Welles says, "was taken by Mr. Churchill," and it included provision for an "effective international organization." Mr. Welles then tells the story of the successful drafts, and he gives a facsimile reproduction of the draft in which Mr. Roosevelt made his own contribution including the *elimination* of the provision for an effective international organization. The text shows that Mr. Churchill made quite an effort to retain the provision but that Mr. Roosevelt — quite understandably — argued that such a provision might encourage further opposition to American aid to the Allies. This is the record in Mr. Roosevelt's own handwriting.

It would be easy to provide similar demonstration of the exact opposite of many of Elliott's "recollections." Eleanor Roosevelt's detached preface is probably the most significant part of "As He Saw It."

HARRY D. GIDEONSE.

Brooklyn, N. Y.




## The Campus Frontier

SIR: The bulges under those sweaters are not six-shooters. The bulges are textbooks. But any Virginia City journalist among your readers in search of a fully-ripe, homegrown bonanza should pack-saddle his typewriter on campus at once—before it busts.

At Bradley University, in Peoria, Illinois, for instance, we are registering our 1600 freshmen in a rented carnival tent, pitched on the pure academic lawn without benefit of ivy. Like gamblers the veterans pour in, slapping down their letters of eligibility, recklessly staking their claims, even in the most uncivilized areas of the curriculum.

The voice of the registrar, piped through the loudspeaker system, is the voice of a judgment-day auctioneer parceling out the last choice bits of heavenly real estate. "Chemistry 101J: Closed! Drawing and Painting 101D: Closed! . . ." But his voice is the voice of Boom. The frontier races across the prairie . . . "New sections open: German 101F, 12 o'clock. Political Science 101E, 5 o'clock . . ."

Did the Forty-Niners of the last century match the Forty-Sixers of this in courage and faith? Would they have had the derring-do to pan their gold in the grim defiles of Freshman English and Business Administration 101?

HARRY WOOD.

Dean, Bradley University,
Peoria, Ill.

## Seattleana

SIR: For a volume to be called "A Treasury of Seattle" I am interested in any out of the way material about Seattle, Washington.

I am particularly interested in seeing unpublished diaries and letters. For example, a letter written from a friend or relative to an Easterner about the Seattle fire, or about the ordinary day-to-day happenings in the city, past or present, might be valuable.

In this book I shall attempt to have the city tell its own story through newspaper accounts, diaries, letters, extracts from legal papers, old songs, as well as through excerpts from contemporary novels and non-fiction.

NARD JONES.

16 West 10th St.,
New York, N. Y.

## Hymn of Hate

SIR: I rapidly run for cover
From emoters of
"It's six of one and
Half dozen of another."

NEIL MCCARTHY.

Chicago, Ill.



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# Accent on Aberrations

*THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NONSENSE. By Bergen Evans. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.* 1946. 275 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

WIELDING a weapon that is something between the rapier of Voltaire and the slapstick of Mr. H. L. Mencken, Mr. Evans sets out to demolish popular superstitions about the animal kingdom, particularly including man. From the ancient (and modern) belief that if the world were round people at the Antipodes would fall off, to the theory cited in *Time* magazine that drunken men walk east (or west) because of the rotation of the earth, from the alleged physical superiority of savages to the alleged inferiority of woman, he takes fallacy after fallacy, strips it naked, and crucifies it. Mingled with the manifest absurdities, you are pretty certain to find some of your own beliefs here pilloried. You may not be one of those who feed iron to the ostrich in the zoo, you may not believe that there is a loss of weight at death which proves the existence of a soul, but (come now) don't you admire the maternal instinct in birds? No such thing! Provident Nature at the mating season gives them a kind of itch which can be relieved by sitting on nice cool eggs, which is why a broody hen would just as soon have a doorknob.

The book is highly entertaining; many of the fantastic ideas cited would be funny by themselves, and they become much more so through Mr. Evans's gift for raging ridicule. For Mr. Evans is infuriated by human folly; an erroneous belief to him is like a red rag to a bull (only that's a fallacy, too). As a matter of fact, he so enjoys working up a good fury that he swings at a few beliefs which nobody believes. He is indignant not only because communicating Christians "celebrate the ancient rites of Attis and Mithra, theophagous in grape juice," which in a certain limited sense is probably true, but also because "seven days before the end of year we worship the pine tree," though the word *worship* is surely unduly severe on us unscientific Christmas revellers.

It must be confessed that Mr. Evans is at times a little brash. Skepticism can itself become a dogma. One is reminded of Kingsley's saying in "The Water Babies," "For hundreds of years all the learned men said that there could be no such things as flying dragons; and when they found out that there were, they called them pterodactyls, because they wouldn't admit they had been wrong." Mr. Evans has an unscientific way of dismissing phenomena for which there is *some* evidence. He is indignant that scientists are investigating extra-sensory perception, which as nearly as I can make out is not disproved, and is therefore a legitimate object of investigation. A number of persons, he says, resuscitated after being apparently drowned, have testified that they did *not* see their whole lives pass before them in a flash; yet it seems difficult to account for the popular belief except by supposing that some apparently drowned persons have testified to it. Moreover, seeing the whole seems impressively like a crude attempt to describe what, on the most modern theories of time, we should expect to happen, when the soul gets outside our time-dimension and, in the now old metaphor, looks down on the whole river from above. Against the old saying, "It's better not to know so much than to know so much that ain't so," one can set two sentences from an anonymous pastiche of Bacon: "Belief is a noble faculty; it is better to believe too much than too little. I had rather believe there are dog-headed men (though there be none) than believe, like the King of Cambodia, that there is no snow."

Yet this is only a plea for a little skepticism of skepticism itself. In both pure science and philosophy, one must be hospitable to hypotheses; but in the field of human relations, it is unquestionably true that the damage is done by knowing so much that ain't so. In the latter chapters of his book, when dealing with beliefs about women, savages, Negroes, and "the poor," things that "everybody knows" and that have been used and are today being used as an excuse to oppress them, Mr. Evans rises to real heights of eloquent satire. This new *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* is as delightful for dipping into as Sir Thomas Browne's itself, and more cannot be said; but it has a sting in its tail.

# President to People

*THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. By Merriman Smith. New York: Harper & Bros.* 1946. 304 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

MERRIMAN SMITH has written himself a book. For a long time he has been one of the country's best practitioners of the art of running like hell for a telephone and dictating the news for which men and nations wait with some of the speed generally associated with jet propulsion. Also, among his intimates and associates in the art of high speed reporting in the White House press room, he has a reputation for endless conversation. Some of those who have listened to him have a feeling that paying Smith for his memoirs is something approximating a system of incentive payments to get ducks to swim. But here they are well worth the price.

Smith has been employed by the United Press Association to report everything of interest about the Presidency of the United States since 1941. He covered Roosevelt for five years. He has covered Harry Truman every day since he came to the White House. It has been his business to know and understand both Presidents. And in this book he has written a swift, easily readable narrative of the Presidency in the years in which watching it has been his job. It is as clear and sharp a picture as the copy Smith dictates. He has wisely not written a "think" book about the Presidency, but few reporters have written a better "see" book about it. Indeed, his chapter on the Warm Springs scene at the time Roosevelt died is an almost perfect piece of vivid reporting.

Smith's book, of course, is not only about Presidents but about the journalistic job of reporting what Presidents do and say. His description of the White House newsmen and their activities is intimate and interesting. Sometimes the comedy of the correspondents who keep the world informed of its most serious concerns seems, as here reported, a little sophomoric. But their eyes are always sharp (sometimes sharper than Presidents and their assistants wish); so are their ears. Smith's description of their work is not only a description of men in the White House press room but of such young men who can see and write in a hurry throughout American journalism. There are good stories in the book. There are some lively pictures of a variety of personages from Churchill to Bob Hope. Smith has tried to write understanding and sympathetic evaluations of both Roosevelt and Truman in realization of their problems, their difficulties, and their personalities. Altogether it is a lively, informed, instructive picture of both the Presidency and the press.



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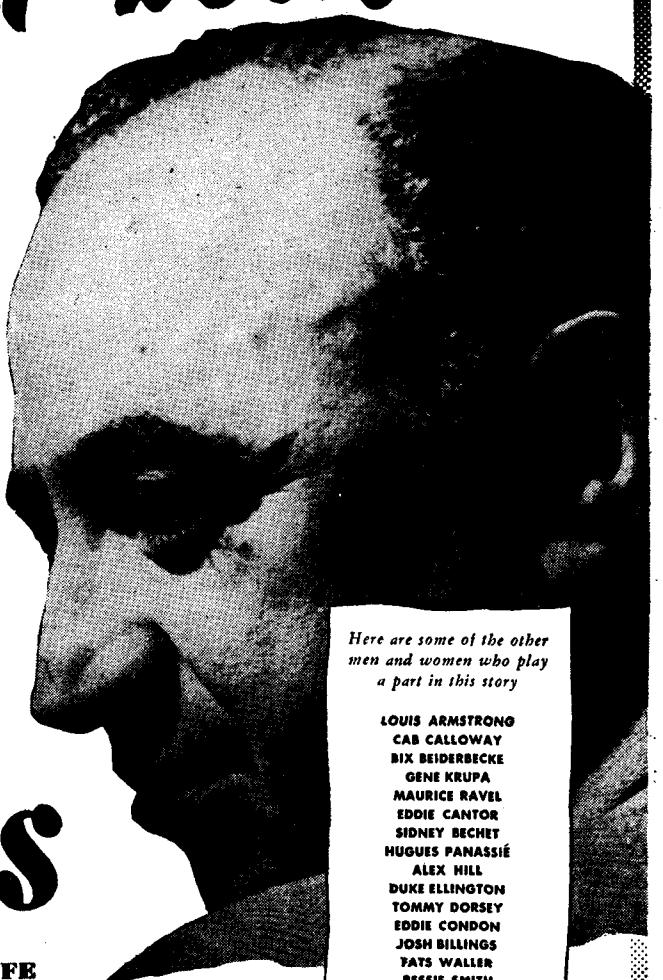

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# Seeing Things

## PLUMES NOT IN THE DUST

CAN it be true? The end has not been reached! There shall be again in France a great poetical literature worthy of 1550, worthy of 1630, worthy of 1660, worthy of 1830! It is here—it is at hand! I shall have lived long enough to see it! In my yearning to see it in its fullness, I shall begin to dread death! Ah, how delicious, alike the hope and the fear!"

It was "Cyrano de Bergerac"* which dislodged these words. Yes, and the tall timber of all these exclamation points, too. They did not empty the mind of a bobby-socker. They came cascading from the pen of a serious historian of French literature, a grave authority on Corneille and Voltaire, a man recognized by his confreres as one of the most intellectual of critics.

When Emile Faguet unloosed them, Rostand's drama had not become the classic in which Walter Hampden trooped year after year, or that José Ferrer has recently brought to the stage. It was new; wonderfully new; an event heard round the world. The triumph it achieved was one of the most immediate and spectacular to be scored anywhere, at any time, in theatrical history. Faguet's enthusiasm was not solitary. It was shared by almost everyone, even if Faguet's excitement misled him into going further than most. Not contenting himself with superlatives, which critically are dangerous enough, he courted disaster by indulging in prophecy. He saluted "Cyrano" as "a herald of a new era," insisting that because of it the twentieth century (though the play had opened on December 28, 1897) had already been inaugurated in a brilliant and triumphant manner.

George Jean Nathan once pointed out that drama is a deliberate intoxicant; dramatic criticism, aromatic spirits of ammonia. It was Jules LeMaître, writing soon after "Cyrano's" premiere, who handed Faguet the aromatic spirits of ammonia which Rostand's drama had made imperative for him. LeMaître was willing to admit "Cyrano" was "an event, no doubt marvelous." He was unwilling, however, to treat it as if it were "supernatural." Although his admiration for the play was warm and genuine, he resigned himself to talking about it with common sense.

LeMaître refused to admit Rostand's comedy inaugurated a century. For that matter, he would not concede that it even made a beginning—as "Le Cid," "Andromache," "L'Ecole des Femmes," "Le Mariage de Figaro," or "Hernani," and "La Dame aux Camélias" had all done in their time. His contention was that, instead of inaugurating anything at all, "Cyrano" prolonged, combined, and blended in itself three centuries of French comic fancy and moral grace. LeMaître saw the play as a work that was retrospective, not innovational; as a recapitulation rather than a new departure. To him it was a brilliant and original resume; more precisely, the culminating efflorescence of an art form three hundred years old.

The praise with which everyone had welcomed "Cyrano" made LeMaître suspicious. It persuaded him that the play had been too fortunate for its own well-being as an epochal work. "It lacks then," said he, "at least one of the signs by which the empirical critic recognizes the work that inaugurates: it has failed to be misunderstood." To LeMaître the fervid reception granted "Cyrano" meant that the public felt completely at home in its presence. Instead of being startled by it, they recognized in it old forms brought to a surprising degree of perfection. "Everything in 'Cyrano'," argued LeMaître, "charms us and nothing offends us; but there is nothing in it to respond to the most serious part of our intellectual and moral preoccupations."

That LeMaître was right and Faguet wrong, time appears to have decided. In America, only the few who are advanced students in French literature are apt to care about just which of the satin patches in that quilt of romanticism called "Cyrano" were contributed by Corneille, Racine, Marivaux, Victor Hugo, or the Elder Dumas.

We know only that, though "Cyrano" is as French as France, the nostalgia it creates is universal. It leads us back in emotion no less than in time. It quickens concepts and ideals which persist in most of us even if nowadays they are supposed to slumber. Rostand's play, confided Arnold Bennett to his diary as long ago as 1904, "is a highly elaborate exercise in the obvious, but the verbal and structural adroitness of the whole thing is tremendous." We may agree with that verdict intellectually, yet the romantic tug is there and the majority of us find it hard to resist.

—*Talbot.*

**His nimbleness of mind "enables [José Ferrer's] Cyrano to parry with his tongue as swiftly as with his rapier."**

We have just lived through the long years of a war in which heroism has been the commonplace of every torturing day. The helmets in this war, however, were topped by no plumes. Our military heroes, with a few exceptions, avoided rhetoric. The battles in which they engaged were, for the most part, ugly, obliterating, impersonal affairs. People, in and out of uniform, were mass targets rather than individual opponents. They did not swashbuckle; they endured.

Their hatred of war was not often hidden. They did what they did because they had to do it. They had neither the time nor the inclination for grandiose gestures. Instead, they performed their duties, dull and unwanted as these generally were, caring little for glory—as glory—and a great deal for the coming of that day when they would be free to go home. Homesickness they found to be as real a foe as the enemy. The field of honor, as such, held no fascination for them.

Yet deed after deed proved that, regardless of what else the world may have lost, man's courage was undiminished. And citation after citation spoke in dry, official prose for actions from which Rostand would have wrung poetry. Palpably, war had changed since Cyrano's day. It had lost its romance, except for those unhappy at home or those with a deceptive memory who were fortunate enough to come through it whole. Or

*CYRANO DE BERGERAC, Brian Hooker's translation of Edmond Rostand's drama, presented by José Ferrer. Staged by Melchor G. Ferrer. Settings and costumes by Lemuel Ayers. Incidental music by Paul Bowles. Production supervised by Arthur S. Friend. With a cast including Mr. Ferrer, Frances Reid, Ernest Graves, Ralph Clanton, Hiram Sherman, Paula Laurence, etc. At the Alvin Theatre.*



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had men grown older? That would be the pleasanter deduction, and supportable were there any proofs that they had also grown wiser. In any case, there was no connection between combat as Cyrano and Christian swaggered through it and combat as it was known to Bill Mauldin's Willie and Joe.

Cyrano would have been as appalled by our notions of battle as we (or at least a stubborn segment of our natures) find it impossible not to be delighted by his. The flamethrower and the atomic bomb are weapons no good Gascogne would have understood. That the bombing of cities was necessary, it is impossible to deny; but that it was romantic, no one can contend. The Gentleman with the Big Nose would have been as hard put to make a graceful *ballade* out of Lidice, Warsaw, Dachau, or Hiroshima as he would have been to tolerate a war in which machines fought machines. Or in which no Roxanes could come rolling along through enemy lines unscathed, in jeeps (much less great lumbering coaches), to bring pastries, chickens, and wines to those about to go into battle. Ernie Pyle's brave men were brave in a different way.

Yet, in spite of the differences (more probably, because of them), most of us are still haunted by dreams of Cyrano's kind of warfare. The worship of the great de-fy in its more plumed forms is ineradicable. Hector, Sir Lancelot, Robin Hood, Richard-Coeur-de-Lion, the Black Knight, D'Artagnan, Mercutio — these are childhood heroes for whom we nourish more than a sneaking fondness, even when both by supposition and the calendar we are adult. To this proud company Cyrano, of course, belongs. The chief reality he achieves as a fictional character is in the world of our fancies rather than in the world of facts. In him we see ourselves, not as we are, but as we are fond of lying to ourselves that as males we might be.

"Cyrano" makes its abundant appeals to these juvenile delusions. This is why it belongs to our past emotionally no less than to the theatre's technically. As surely as the Comte de Guiche is its villain, the play is the enemy of realism. Its story of the man who had the heart but not the face with which to be a great lover is pipedream stuff, told in pipedream terms. This is one of the reasons for its appeal. This, and the kind of spaciousness the script can claim in its spirit. And its pleasant melancholy. Cyrano's willingness to speak his passion for Roxane through Christian carries self-sacrifice to what LeMaître described as voluptuous



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lengths. In his ability in the balcony scene to turn amorous ventriloquist and persuade Roxane, under the nonexistent cover of stage moonlight, that he *is* Christian, employing Christian's voice, we have the perfect symbol of what is unabashedly romantic and theatrical in the play.

That is why, though "Cyrano" continues to please us by feeding our visions of valor and setting before us a pretty fable of frustrated love, we cannot take it seriously. Doubtless we would surrender to it more completely than we do, if only Rostand were able to speak for himself instead of being spoken for by a translator. Even an English version as adroit as is the one by Brian Hooker is forced to play on a single piano a score intended for an orchestra. When Rostand has his "Pegasus shot out from under him" (as George Brandes said of Ibsen), we naturally forget "Cyrano" is a poet's work and accept it as an actors' piece.

Like most other Americans who share birth certificates with me, I never saw Coquelin or Mansfield in the comedy. Until Mr. Ferrer reached for the putty with which to extend his nose, Walter Hampden was my only Cyrano. In its long day, Mr. Hampden's was one of the most admired performances of our time. He was earnest, spoke Mr. Hooker's verse intelligently, and charmed hundreds of thousands of playgoers, among whom I regret to confess I could never count myself. His Gascon lacked fire. It struck me then as having a campus air. It made me think of a Harvard instructor hiding under the Cambridge elms to state the love of a luckier undergraduate for a Radcliffe girl. When at his death Mr. Hampden spoke of his *panache*, I felt certain he had in mind a mortarboard.

Mr. Hampden had one great advantage over Mr. Ferrer. He was tall. Physically, he dominated the stage. Except in this matter of height, however, I found Mr. Ferrer much more satisfactory. He is nimbler of body, which counts hugely in making the first act duel as exciting as it should be. Nimbler of mind, too; a fact which enables his Cyrano to parry with his tongue as swiftly as with his rapier. His spirit is much younger; his blood more turbulent. The challenges Cyrano enjoys as a duelist are not more constant than those he presents to an actor. In scene after scene, these cruel tests occur. The rhyming duel, the famous speech on his nose, the passionate verses spoken in the garden, and the (for my money) tiresome description of the journey to the moon—all of these are among the hazards of the course. Anyone who knows the play awaits their approach with apprehension.

Mr. Ferrer takes these hurdles easily. If, as a swaggerer, he is of the half-pint size, he nonetheless suggests the dimensions of the part even when he does not fill them. What his performance lacks in genius, it supplies abundantly in competence. I do not see how anyone who has seen Mr. Ferrer in "Charley's Aunt," as Iago, in "Key Largo," and now in "Cyrano" can doubt that he is one of the more accomplished of our actors; the kind of player in whose talents we are happy to invest our faith.

His production of "Cyrano" is as skilful as his own performance. It is fortunate in the charming Roxane of Frances Reid and the truly humorous Ragueneau of Hiram Sherman. It is well set, too. And moves with the sort of unction which, though a commonplace in the productions of new plays, is usually rare in the revival of classics. We may nowadays share LeMaître's point of view rather than Faguet's on the subject of "Cyrano." But our gratitude to Rostand remains surprisingly undiminished. His drama can still boast its *panache*.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

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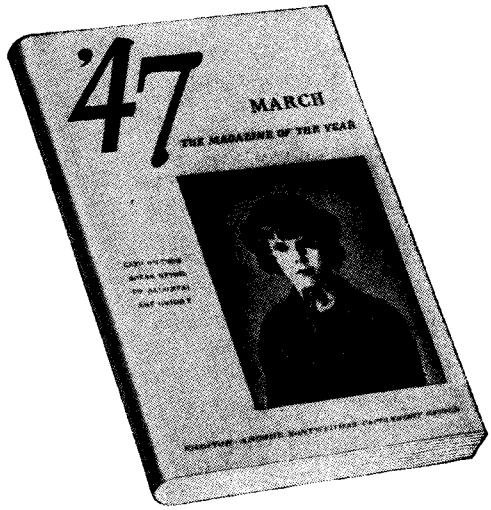


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# A Bison's Ribs, a Bit of Flint

*THE LOST AMERICANS. By Frank C. Hibben. Illustrated by John De Grasse. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1946. 196 pp. $2.50.*

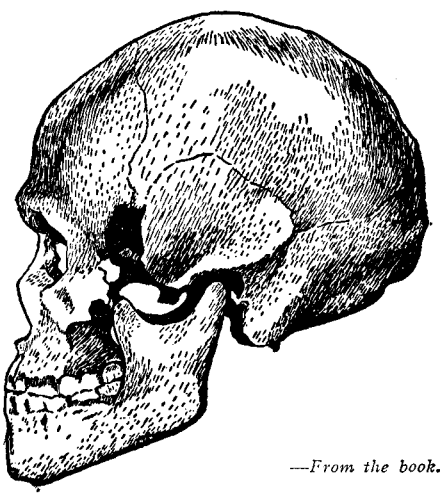
Reviewed by EDWIN GRANT BURROWS

IT WAS time somebody wrote this book. Discoveries of the last twenty years have built up an entirely new picture of the first human migrations to this continent. For one thing, they have multiplied the estimated duration of human occupancy of America from about 2,500 years, a figure approved by the best authorities as lately as 1925, to somewhere around 25,000. A flint point found between the ribs of an extinct kind of bison proved the first multiplication. Geologists had that bison pretty well dated. Still earlier types of flint work have been found since then. Yet only the few who keep up with archeological journals, or who have happened upon a lecture by a specialist, have had a chance to hear the story at all fully. It is a story that should prove exciting to many more than that.

For two reasons Dr. Frank C. Hibben is one of the best qualified to tell the world. In the first place, he is an archeologist, specializing in North America, and has himself taken part in some of the exploration and discovery he tells about. In the second place, he spins a yarn that will interest even those who cannot tell one chipped flint from another.

He manages to put into words the imaginative excitement that cheers people like him through long and dusty digging: "Up and down the floor of this valley that has now disappeared the piles of bison bones from the hunting of Folsom times accumulated. In and around them are the flecks of charcoal from the ancient fires. It has been ten thousand years since those black bits of wood glowed red. Mingled with the scattered bison bones were the pieces of flint that give direct evidence that man was the animal that laired there."

The title of the book might have been "The First Americans." Why call them "lost"? For a good and curious reason. Although the bison bones found at several sites are in enormous quantity, and though the best-known of the early flint implements, the Folsom point, has now been found from New Mexico to Alaska, not a single human bone—not even a front tooth, as the author repeatedly complains—has been found with them. Nobody can tell why. Even if "Folsom man" cremated his dead—which cave-dwelling hunters have not been known to do—a few charred fragments, at least, should have remained. The archeologists are still searching. Hibben hopes to try northeastern Siberia next.



—*From the book.*

**Minnesota Minnie—America's First Lady?**

The book begins by putting the lost Americans in their place, showing that for all their venerable antiquity they are mere newcomers beside a number of Old World varieties. Human habitation of that hemisphere apparently goes back 500,000 years or so. Hibben's first pages pay tribute to an amateur archeologist of only a century ago, Boucher de Perthes. He made his living in a lowly government post in northern France, but in his off time kept fossicking among the gravels thereabouts, and finding flints of a peculiar shape which he thought must be artificial. He held out against the heavy artillery of the pulpit and the superior smiles of the accredited experts. He was a pioneer in science who has been too little celebrated.

Unlike the beetle-browed, chinless creatures who left their first axes for Boucher de Perthes to find, the first Americans were pretty surely of the same animal species as ourselves. If we have no bones of theirs, how do we know that? Well, there is still a little room for doubt. But no remains of human beings of extinct types have been found on this hemisphere. A number of sensational discoveries have been reported, but none proved to be as sensational as that.

Besides, the specialists may have some bones of the makers of Folsom points, or the later Yuma or earlier Sandia types, without being able to prove it. The dating of these bones is still shaky, and none of their owners was considerate enough to lie down for the last time beside the skeleton of a contemporary bison, or a piece of flint worked with characteristic technique. But at least there have been some finds which suggest great age, not only by the locality in which the bones were found, but by physical characteristics, such as a relatively long and narrow head, which distinguish them from contemporary American Indians.

The leading candidate for the title of First Lady now is the skull known to archeologists, in their playful moments, as Minnesota Minnie. Not only is she satisfactorily long-headed, but she has huge teeth and her face pushes forward into just the hint of a snout. She will not tell her age. She may have slipped through the ice over an ancient lake, or may have been buried after the lake dried up. If the lake was still there when she had flesh on her bones, then she was a contemporary, perhaps a relative, of the makers of some of these pre-Indian flint implements.

The author sketches in what is known of scenery and history about these first families, and makes good reading of it all. He gives a convincing summary of the generally accepted conclusion that all pre-European inhabitants of the Americas arrived by way of Alaska. He sinks those lost continents which have such a fascination for a dreamy kind of antiquarian. The evidence will not keep them above water, at least, not at any time since human beings first appeared.

The book is aimed so exclusively at the general reader that it has no bibliography, which may disappoint a few who would like to carry the inquiry further. Nor is there any index. Still, these omissions make it lighter in the hand, and less formidable looking. It is also made easy on the eyes by bold, old-style type, with plenty of space between the lines. Illustrations by John De Grasse are vivid without ever doing violence to what facts are known.

One of the chapters, called "End of a Universe," discusses the sudden and mysterious extinction of most of the great beasts on which early men fed in both hemispheres. The author's detective work points to man as the killer. Though the case is not strong enough to convict, this gives us a new way to phrase the most haunting question of our time. Will the Pleistocene fauna be avenged?


STAGE

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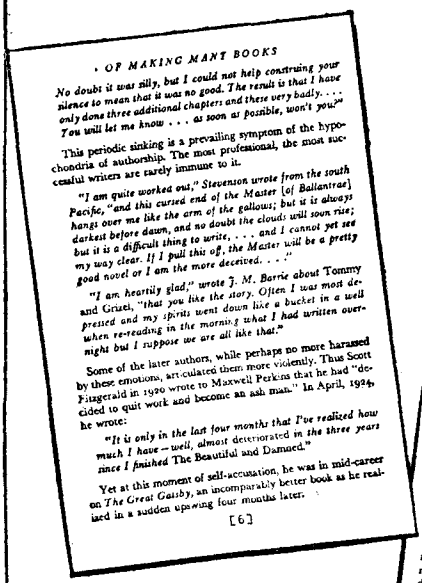


OF MAKING MANY BOOKS

*No doubt it was silly, but I could not help construing your silence to mean that it was no good. The result is that I have only done three additional chapters and there very badly. . . . You will let me know . . . as soon as possible, won't you?"*

This periodic sinking is a prevailing symptom of the hypochondria of authorship. The most professional, the most successful writers are rarely immune to it.

*"I am quite worked out," Stevenson wrote from the south Pacific, "and this cursed end of the Master [of Ballantrae] hangs over me like the arm of the gallows; but it is always darkest before dawn, and no doubt the clouds will soon rise; but it is a difficult thing to write, . . . and I cannot yet see my way clear. If I pull this off, the Master will be a pretty good novel or I am the more deceived. . . ."*

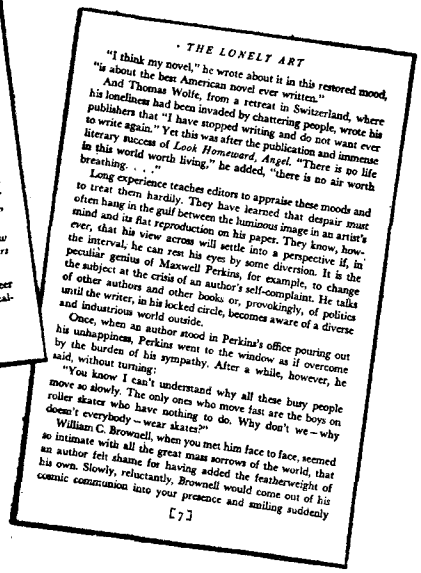
*"I am heartily glad," wrote J. M. Barrie about* Tommy and Grizel, *"that you like the story. Often I was most depressed and my spirits went down like a bucket in a well when re-reading in the morning what I had written overnight but I suppose we are all like that."*

Some of the later authors, while perhaps no more harassed by these emotions, art-culated them more violently. Thus Scott Fitzgerald in 1930 wrote to Maxwell Perkins that he had "decided to quit work and become an ash man." In April, 1924, he wrote:

*"It is only in the last four months that I've realized how much I have—well, almost deteriorated in the three years since I finished* The Beautiful and Damned."

Yet at this moment of self-accusation, he was in mid-career on *The Great Gatsby*, an incomparably better book as he realized in a sudden upswing four months later.

[6]



THE LONELY ART

*"I think my novel,"* he wrote about it in this restored mood, *"is about the best American novel ever written."*

And Thomas Wolfe, from a retreat in Switzerland, where his loneliness had been invaded by chattering people, wrote his publishers that "I have stopped writing and do not want ever to write again." Yet this was after the publication and immense literary success of *Look Homeward, Angel.* "There is no life in this world worth living," he added, "there is no air worth breathing. . . ."

Long experience teaches editors to appraise these moods and to treat them hardily. They have learned that despair must often hang in the gulf between the luminous image in an artist's mind and its flat reproduction on his paper. They know, however, that his view across will settle into a perspective if, in the interval, he can rest his eyes by some diversion. It is the peculiar genius of Maxwell Perkins, for example, to change the subject at the crisis of an author's self-complaint. He talks of other authors and other books or, provokingly, of politics until the writer, in his locked circle, becomes aware of a diverse and industrious world outside.

Once, when an author stood in Perkin's office pouring out his unhappiness, Perkins went to the window as if overcome by the burden of his sympathy. After a while, however, he said, without turning:

"You know I can't understand why all these busy people move so slowly. The only ones who move fast are the boys on roller skates who have nothing to do. Why don't we—why doesn't everybody—wear skates?"

William C. Brownell, when you met him face to face, seemed so intimate with all the great mass sorrows of the world, that an author felt shame for having added the featherweight of his own. Slowly, reluctantly, Brownell would come out of his cosmic communion into your presence and smiling suddenly

[7]

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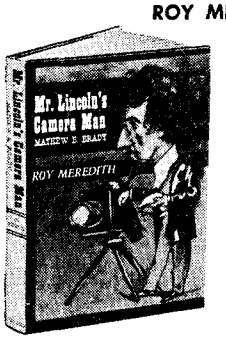


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# Thirty Years in Solitary

*THE SPEAR IN THE SAND. By Raoul C. Faure. New York: Harper & Bros.* 1946. 280 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THIS is an extraordinary book, one of the most extraordinary that have come to me for review during the past twenty-five years. That I found it less enjoyable than remarkable is probably due to failure on my part. That I found it exhausting because of its author's almost fabulous and completely tireless powers of description, that I put it down for a week or so after completing its first half, may prove that I am growing short of wind. But I am not sure. I suspect that even the hardiest reader will find his feet lagging as he tries to follow Mr. Faure through the many years that he describes. Yet, even while one wearies, one can still admire, for it is all admirable. Were it less so, had the author been less completely successful in doing what he set out to do, the reading of the book would, almost certainly, be a less arduous enterprise. It is because the author has made time and loneliness—or one might say timelessness and loneliness—so very real that the reader, held motionless like Mr. Faure's hero in an endless sequence of days and seasons, struggles to find a way out and yearns towards an ending. "The Spear in the Sand" is not a long book, measured by words: it is art that makes it long.

The story is that of a man subjected to the "inhuman trial of absolute solitude, the more inhuman that it was solitude immersed in limpid perfection." Of a man subjected to this trial for year after year, and decade after decade, with no hope or rescue or reprieve. It is the story of a body made perfect by the easy exercise of swimming and daily living in the sun, and of a mind that fights desperately to keep the "fragility and the complexity of a human being, his capacity for suffering, for regretting, for remembering"; a losing battle that forces the vanquished to the verge of madness and beyond.

It is the story of a young scientist named Sausal, who sets out to chart a South Pacific current as assistant to two irascible elders, and, after storms and mutiny and sudden death, finds himself in the region of the Great Calms—to which legend says few have gone, and from which no man has returned—the sole inhabitant of an island of unearthly beauty, the sole spectator of "the impeccable cameo of the atoll and the oval palette of the lagoon." From the beginning he knows in his heart that no saving sail will ever be sighted by his eyes, for it is only by a miracle that sails ever cross the mystic frontier that he has crossed. And, at the outset, he determines to fulfill "the stern duty imposed on him, that of being worthy of the encircling harmony, of becoming some day part of the harmony itself and cease being an estranged and tormented visitor."

But, once he has salvaged the wrecked ship's stores and built his hut, there is little to do but swim and fish and eat and sleep and study the movements of clouds and palms and winds, and the teeming life of the lagoon. Had his been a harder, harsher island, it would in some ways have been a better one. He would have had to work to live, and work would have turned his mind from loneliness.

> . . . He would not have time to worry about his sanity, to feel his complexity crumble and disintegrate into infinite, liquid peace. He would not have time to abandon himself to the last island and die the fantastic death reserved for the very few. For that, he had to remain free and the queer gods of his venture had seen to it. Fresh water flowed abundantly from a bed of flat rocks discovered at low tide near the shore. Coconuts, mangoes, papayas, tuberous roots, spiced berries grew in profusion. The lagoon and the mandrepore belt were inexhaustible. The climate warm and even; he could have slept in the open without discomfort for the greater part of the year.

Sausal's solitude, in which struggle alternates with surrender, lasts for some thirty years; and struggle and surrender assume many different forms and moods. Early in his trial, the man is tempted to people his island with fellow sojourners, and he has endless conversations with a brilliant petroleum engineer, until he discovers that the engineer is only himself as he would have liked to be. For the first few years he is able to dive back into the past at will and return with booty, but later, when his life has been transformed into a "radiant vacancy," these excursions become increasingly difficult and less profitable. Of Mura, whom he loved and lived with, only luminous eyes consent to be evoked at last. Late (unbelievably late, it seems to me) he turns to books and the idea of writing, for he has a library at hand, and quantities of ink and paper; but he finds that words have lost all meaning for him. He has become used to the thing itself, to the thing-in-itself, to the lagoon, the palm, the hermit crab, in place of the black and crooked symbols that represent them on white paper. With mathematics it is different: "He glided without effort from the ordered dance of the equations to the tufted swaying of fronds, from the smooth flow of parabolic curves to the lustered ellipse of the lagoon." But mathematics hold his interest for only two years.

**Raoul C. Faure "writes English with a richness that makes his American and English contemporaries seem poverty-stricken."**

It is nature that serves him best and constantly: sky, sea, and land, moonrise and sunrise, trees and flowers, mussel and oyster and sea slug and abolene. Nature in all her phases, in every manifestation great and small that the lagoon affords. And it is nature that serves Mr. Faure best, inspiring him to those beautiful, brilliant, elaborate, precise, poetical, often moving descriptions that go on paragraph after paragraph, page after page, and chapter after chapter. They are truly amazing. But there are those of us who will prefer Sausal the thinker to Sausal the observer, who will wish there had been more of the former and less of the latter; for Mr. Faure has proved himself as much at home, and as eloquent, in the world of ideas as in the external world.

Any review of this book would be lacking that failed to mention the passage which describes Sausal's maddened pursuit of an illusory woman through a delirious night. This alone would be enough to make an author's reputation, for it is imaginative-realistic writing of the highest order, excruciating in its grasp upon the reader's sympathy, terrible in its impact. And it is all the more effective because it brings into sudden, climactic focus a part of Sausal's lonely life on which Mr. Faure has chosen not to dwell at length.

Of French parentage, this author



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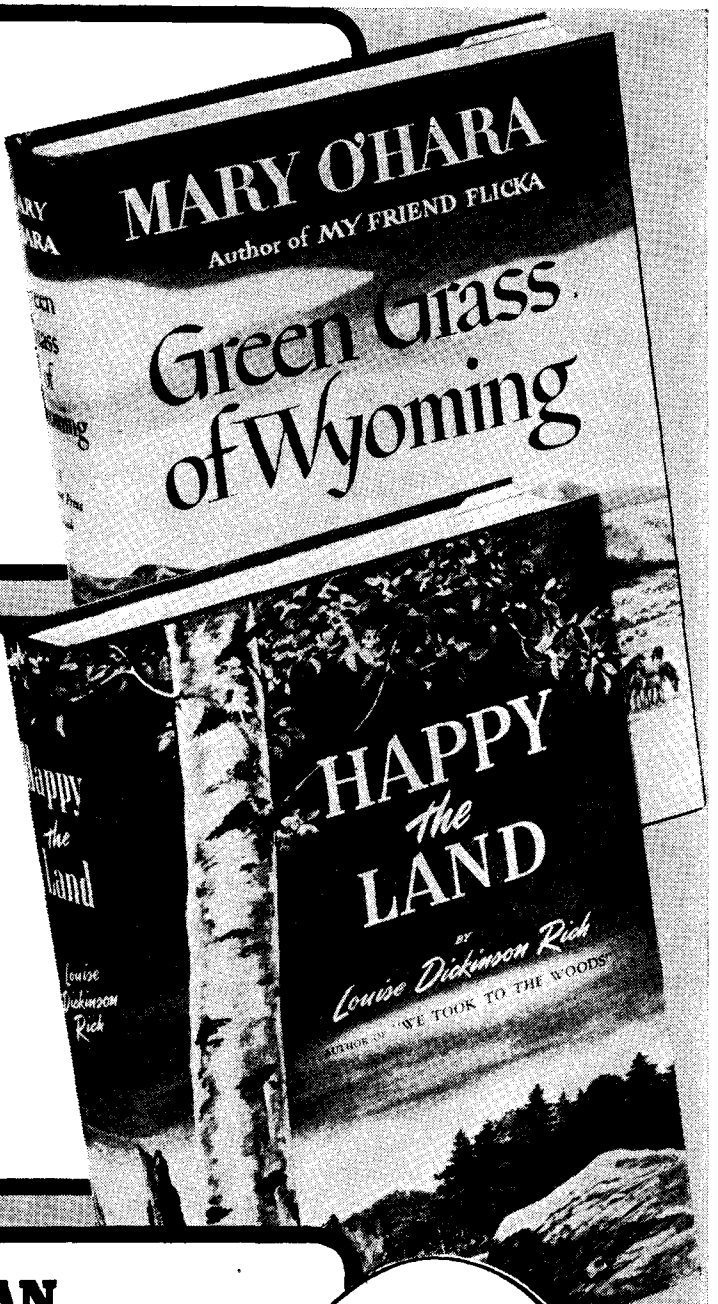


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who was born in Cairo, in 1909, writes English with a richness and a resourcefulness that make most of his American and English contemporaries seem poverty-stricken and parochial by comparison. An occasional Gallicism suggests his origin, and he uses such words as "acerb," "insufflate," and "lacinating" rather more readily than most writers of good English use them.

But I am willing to believe that he can do almost anything with the language that he wishes to do, and I am eager to see what he chooses to do next.

# Is a Novel a Novel a Novel?

*THE BITTER SEASON. By Robert M. Coates. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 180 pp. $2.50.*

Reviewed by DONALD HOUGH

THIS solo job by Mr. Coates, gliding easily enough from monologue to soliloquy to reverie and back again, sometimes bringing in the names of persons other than the protagonist, called Tom, inescapably poses that currently irritating question as to whether a novel is a novel is a novel. Until the Federal Trade Commission or whoever it is comes up with a reasonable definition, the only answer is for the customer to lay his dough on the line and find out. Hoping, perhaps, that some day a lecturer will chain a Hollywood babe to his platform and bill himself as a play bringing everything to a head.

Fiction, as I understand it, and never mind the specific form, is an account of something that didn't really and truly happen. But what about something that in both form and content is nothing other than an outline of personal reactions to a given scene, of a point of view, and which by the device of naming a protagonist is called a novel? What I am getting at is not that Mr. Coates is necessarily writing his own story and calling it Tom's, but that if it were his own story its only claim upon the reader would lie in its validity as a personal projection. What as a personal story, and so labelled, might hold considerable interest, as a work of fiction may well collapse. That is to say, when a person suggests that his work is one of the imagination, he reasonably can be expected to aim a few cuts deeper.

This book, written in the first person by Tom, starts out by explaining that he is separated from his wife, Laura, a circumstance with the approximate substance of a declaration to the blonde on the next bar stool that he is free for the evening. Laura is mentioned a couple of times later on, but on the whole her existence turns out to have been largely typographical. From there, Tom glances at the war-news headlines on the newsstands and listens to a few bartenders and to a soldier or two, all of whom are Lee Bowman, and concludes that war isn't cricket.

The book is blurbed as offering the viewpoint of those who were "the civilian in wartime; the men a little too old, or a little too frail, to be warriors." (Leaving out those who were a little too clever.) But I could find no connection between this supposed aim and the performance I am attempting to discuss. I approached this book fully aware of having many times in my life missed what I later had to be told was significant and subtle writing. So I tried to distinguish as I went along between a subtle association of events and no association at all, but still without so diligently pursuing the former that I might lose sight of the difference between subtlety and preciousness.

So after I had read, in one two-page sequence, "It is dark. It is night. It is late" and "(it is dark, it is late, it is cold)" and "(it is late, it is cold)" and "It is dark, it is cold" and "(it is late. It is dark, and it (is it: dark?) Is it cold, do you think, on the deck of an invasion barge; and not a seat, not a hero's name, but the deck spray-battered, fog-damp . . . ?)"—so after reading this, and discovering that it was all caused by Tom trying to make his way from a saloon on Lexington to a coffee shop on Third Avenue, and doing it nicely, without any symbolism that I could discover, I decided that Mr. Coates could have reviewed his own book simply by calling it "The Bitter, Bitter, Bitter Season." It was that tough, Mac.

There are 228 remarks in parentheses—including double ones—in the 180 pages of the book.

Well, having established his period in history by quoting war headlines, Tom then established his mood and his subject by devoting the major part of his tale to readings from his address book, starting way back in high school. He remembers the first names of most of the girls, some of whose breasts he says he toyed with. This device has been used a number of times by way of showing what a man facing death in combat thinks about, and in such application it serves a certain dramatic purpose, but when used by an individual who has looked at the newspaper headlines and gone to the nearest bar to shudder, it seems somehow to lose impact.

This rather long recital is nice, if you like girls, which I suppose most people do. And Tom, now and then, allows the implications of the war to intrude, as—"I had meant to write a chapter on death like the chapter on love, but I found it curiously difficult. There are parallels. There is a moment in love that is a kind of death, and in death there is ecstasy; both are adventures that lead the mind beyond understanding and even beyond emotion, into pure sensation." (Things are tough all over, Mac.)

Then, with this clear opening, back to the girls again; and toward the end of the book some more newspaper headlines. I don't know whether it was Mr. Coates's fault or my own that I came to the end of the book so suddenly. He is a good workman at the typewriter end of his craft and he leads you on, paragraph by paragraph, through sheer competence in writing, and a dangling hope that something is going to happen, until finally he seems tired of chasing his tale and steps nimbly aside to let you read on into the dust-jacket flap. And whoever wrote that copy has something. As to those "a little too old, or a little too frail, to be warriors," I believe that the story of our times never will be complete until this, too, is written; and I have no doubt that somebody will take that inspired hint and, someday, write it.



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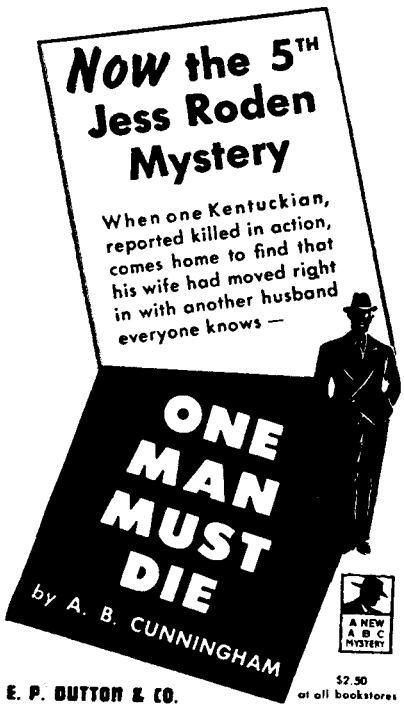
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# Young Man Who Got Around

*DEATH MY GENERATION. By Michael Fyodrov. New York: Roy Publishers.* 1946. 301 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by F. C. WEISKOPF

THE stormy period between the eve of the First and the end of the Second World War has presented us, as a by-product, with a new sort of lost generation, in many ways different from that of the twenties. Of this new lost generation, a quick-living, death-accustomed, overactive lot who write their zipper style autobiographies at thirty or thirty-five (and God knows, they can cram more turbulent life experience into their diaries at nineteen than the Goncourts were able to do at forty) Michael Fyodrov is a very good although a somehow overexposed sample.

Born in 1910, the son of a Russian aristocrat and an American mother, young Michael was kissed by the Czar's daughters at four and thrown into the stream of refugees from the Revolution at seven. He came to America with his mother and brother, his father remaining and vanishing in the old country. After a short and rather glamorous stay in California, with the remnants of the Fyodrov fortune spent, the family moved to New York where the mother set out on a new career as an anti-Jewish, anti-Bolshevist, and anti-Freemason expert by writing articles about and in the vein of a document which later on was to become one of the pillars of Nazi propaganda—"The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." With the money earned in this way, Michael was sent to Switzerland for a distinguished education which, however, remained fragmentary, being soon replaced by the teachings provided by the company of a tough gang of boys and girls growing up on the streets of New York in the atmosphere of the Roaring Twenties. After that, again a bit of distinguished education in a preparatory school near Paris where the prospective student for a science degree was initiated into the mysteries of Verlaine, mathematics, and sexual intercourse (taught to him by his mathematics teacher, a daughter of the school principal).

Life as a student in Paris, idylls out of a modernized version of Henri Murger's "Scènes de la Vie de Bohême," work in a factory, sweet romance in a French provincial town, not so sweet experiences in Marseilles, switch to England as a marine engine agent, business adventures with poor fishermen and lusty adventures, struggle with the depression and loss of a business, whirling around in London's aristocratic society, more romances, casual jobs all the way from advertising manager for a famous maker of raincoats to demonstrator of radios and amateur private detective. . . .

Then by the time you have accompanied Mr. Fyodrov through all these experiences and adventures, you are half through his book and very much under the impression of knowing a graying gentleman of the where-have - all - those-years-gone-but-what-the-hell-it's-been-fun type when you suddenly stumble upon a new chapter opening with the words: "So I am twenty-one and out of a job."

On goes the story, dashing forth like a recklessly driven car on a bumpy road. Reporter in Germany with strong sympathies for the newly founded Third Reich, author and lec-

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turer on this suddenly discovered ideal, equally sudden convert to his Russian heritage, successful novelstory writer and unsuccessful novelist, teacher of French, lecturer for the "Friends of the Soviet Union," editor of a technical paper, contributor to the London *Daily Worker*, biology teacher, manager of the *Soviet War News*, ghost writer, free lance journalist, admirer of Nietzsche and Marx and Perry in quick succession, inmate of a prison and guest of the most exclusive London clubs—this is but a fragmentary enumeration of the stations on Mr. Fyodrov's race through life.

There is stuff for quite a few books condensed into one slender volume, and more than once the reader feels tempted to wish that the author had understood the old Roman wisdom of "less would have been more." If Mr. Fyodrov had spent a little more time on writing; if he had omitted his frequent editorials on political and historical events; if he had explained rather than stated his startling switches from one philosophy or political opinion to the opposite; if he had stuck to the creative type of narrative he attempts in the first chapters, only to abandon it later on, then he would have given us more than a lot of raw material for the study of the hectic fringe of life in the first third of this century. Still, justice requires us to acknowledge that Mr. Fyodrov, while considering himself a true product of a cynical lost generation, keeps in the end the "faith that within us are the seeds of a better nature and better life."

FRASER YOUNG'S
LITERARY CRYPT: NO. 176

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 176 will be found in the next issue.*

NYQM'I T PZTW PZHN

CDIIDYB CZJ OFZH CNWW.

—ONIJEI.—ACDWDA STDWNM.

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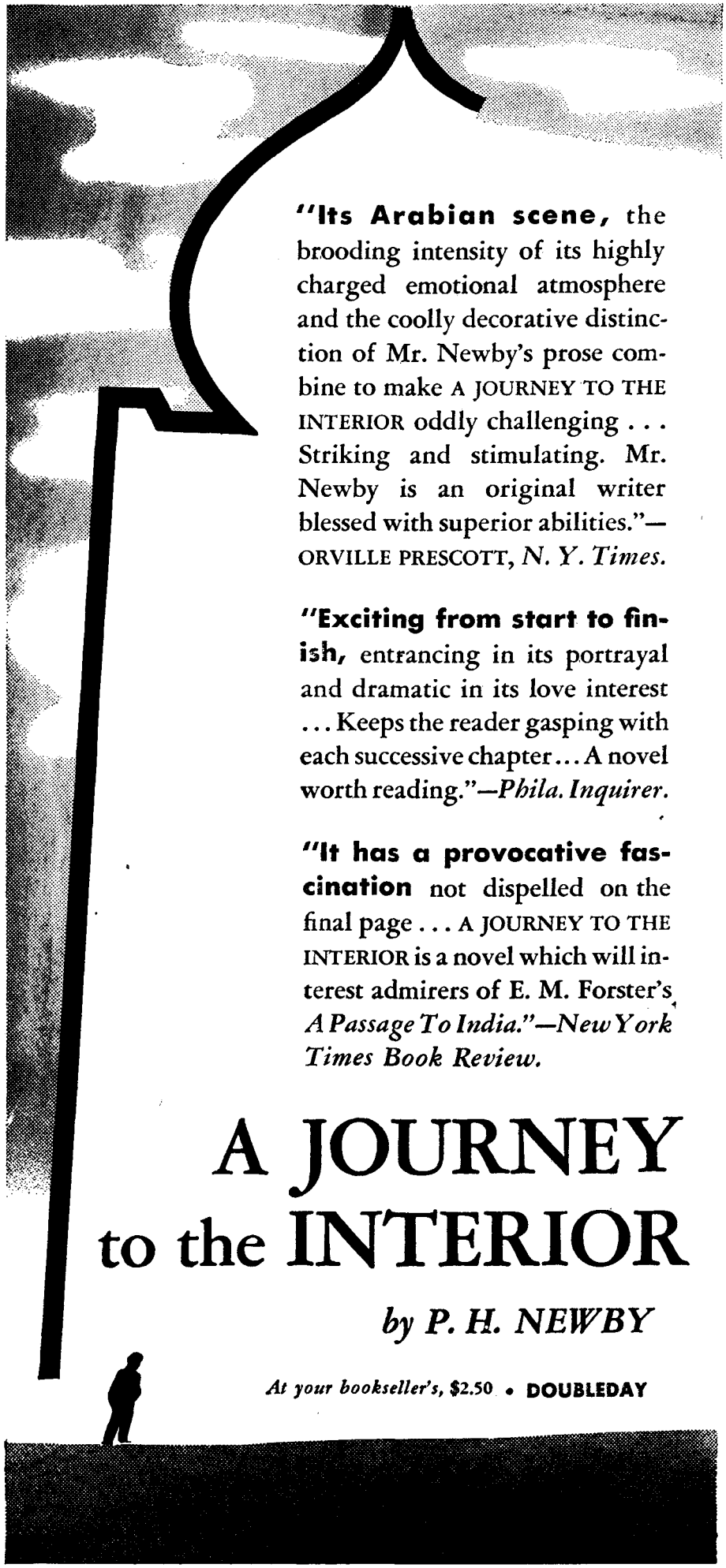
*Answer to Literary Crypt No. 175*

Conduct is three-fourths of our life and its largest concern.
MATHEW ARNOLD.
—*Literature and Dogma.*

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# One Language Into Another

*TRANSLATION. Edited by Neville Braybrooke and Elizabeth King. London: Phoenix Press. 1945. Unpaged. Two Shillings.*

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

THIS pamphlet is the first number of a series which promises very fair indeed. The editors propose from time to time to publish the best English translations of distinguished foreign work on which they can lay their obviously competent hands. Their initial issue is devoted to poetry drawn from some twelve languages, and though the performance, as was to be expected, is not uniformly excellent, the average is high. But they do not intend to confine themselves entirely to verse, and in future will publish "short stories, diaries, letters and journals" as well. In a world where, as the airlines occasionally inform us, a man is only forty-eight hours away from his antipodes, we need not argue about the value of such a project. Whatever tends to break down barriers between provincial minds (and all minds are provincial) has its self-evident justification. And it would seem that some organization like UNESCO would be well advised if it got behind and shoved. It would be a sensible thing to launch similar modest enterprises in various linguistic capital cities of this barbaric, and chauvinistic planet.

The reviewer particularly enjoyed Edmund Blunden's rendering of an ode of Horace, in which, it seemed to him, the Roman's strange mixture of the conversational and the marmoreal is perfectly recaptured. E. F. Watling has distilled nearly all that is graceful and touching in a poem of Propertius. Leopardi's famous "The Evening of the Feast-Day" comes off finely from the experienced hand of R. C. Trevelyan. Descending to contemporaries, the reviewer found himself moved and interested by "Poem for a Gramophone Record," translated from the Spanish of Lanuza by Hugo Manning, though his enjoyment was qualified by an unnecessarily awkward phrase or two. And there is excitement in Paul Nord's version of "Dionysus in his Cradle" by the Greek poet, Sikelianos. Though Mr. Nord lapses occasionally into the odd turns of phrase which are the primal curse of translation, enough fire has come over to make you want to spell your way through the original. In general it may be said of the collection that all the work is competent but that some is no more than that.

The translation of poetry is an awful business. Whatever Emerson may have been talking about when he coined the dangerous phrase, "the instant dependence of form on soul," the expression has dreadful implications for the translator. He must find a form that must instantly depend on the soul he is monkeying with, and this is no easy discovery. If we transmute de Nerval into some fashionable loose idiom, we shall conduct the Prince of Aquitaine to a "tour (joliment bien) abolie." And cleaving to the original strictness, we may look stilted and quite as silly. Pope was a genius, but Homer minces in couplets that were perfect for another purpose.

Nevertheless, the reviewer hopes that Mr. Braybrooke and Miss King may be successful in their undertaking, which, however unassuming, is no light one. The translator has often been compared to the engraver who transfers what he can of a painting to his colorless surface. If he is Raphael Morghens or Timothy Cole, knowledge is increased and, it may be, pleasure also. But it is no cinch. It is hard work to bring Lermontov into England through the iron curtain of language, and just as hard to take Keats in the opposite direction. Some think it even harder to get an American secretary of state to see eye to eye with a Soviet commissar on matters of procedure and substance. If such a meeting of minds be at all proper and possible, the conventional thing to say is that the difficulties are not unconnected. Conceivably, the commonplace might contain some residual vestiges of truth.

## LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. The dead girl's spirit, in "Requiescat," by Arnold.
2. "The Yak," by Hilaire Belloc.
3. A leaf, in "Evelyn Hope," by Browning.
4. "Today," by Carlyle.
5. The pleasure dome, in "Kubla Khan," by Coleridge.
6. "The Chambered Nautilus," by Holmes.
7. The wigwam of Nokomis, in "Hiawtha," by Longfellow.
8. The light seen by Columbus, in "Columbus," by Miller.
9. The tree, in "Woodman, Spare That Tree," by Morris.
10. "The Lost Chord," by Proctor.
11. Music, in "Twelfth Night," by Shakespeare.
12. Life, in "Macbeth," by Shakespeare.
13. Love, in "To—" by Shelley.
14. "On a Girdle," by Waller.
15. "A Noiseless, Patient Spider," by Whitman.



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# Unipedette

*OUT ON A LIMB. By Louise Baker. New York: Whittlesey House. 1946. 213 pp. $2.*

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

THIS autobiography by the author of "Party Line" might well have been entitled, like one of its chapters, "The Leg and I." Indeed it is even possible that Louise Baker's leg may some day catch up with Betty MacDonald's egg. Both books tell unusual personal stories with breezy forthrightness; both authors wisecrack their way through adverse circumstances and manage to have what Miss Baker calls "a perfectly hell-raising good time." The chronicler of the egg has advantages both in background and foreground over the chronicler of the leg—she is also funnier—but each of them provides novel and blithe entertainment of an unpretentious variety.

From the moment when at the age of eight Louise Baker lost her right leg she turned her handicap into an asset. While still in the hospital she exploited her pathetic condition to acquire more dolls than she could play with, and as soon as she had learned to get about on crutches she found ways to make good, if unfair, use of them. However, her father early taught her that she must not profit from the sympathy she aroused, and she learned in time to value his lessons. Most of her story concerns the legitimate ways in which her lost limb won her a series of exciting adventures, including two husbands, a varied assortment of jobs, and a trip to Europe financed by "a couple of angels on lend-lease to the Earth."

Obviously, Louise Baker was no ordinary girl. Energetic and athletic, she determined to engage in sports—and did. Besides playing tennis, she swam, rode horseback, and even had a try at skiing. Unsentimental to the point of flippancy, she viewed her amputation objectively, realized the difficulty of capturing beaux, and feared she would never succeed in getting "a really wonderful man without brains." She apparently got a pretty good one with brains, however, for her first husband, who looked like Ronald Colman, was a professor and though he didn't have "a peaceful moment until he escaped via the divorce court," she speaks of him as "a nice man, quite undeserving of his fate."

From this experience she learned that no one dies of a broken heart: "put together and given a reasonable rest cure, an old ticker will get you


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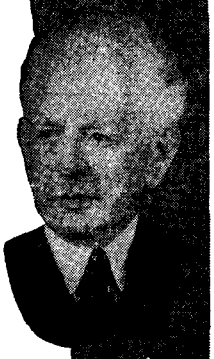

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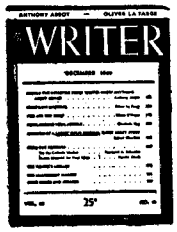


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into almost as much fascinating trouble as a brand-new one." Hers apparently did, for her second marriage, to a writer, took place after so precipitous an engagement that she received a parental wire reading, "Insist you get acquainted with this stranger before marrying him." This stranger took her to Arizona and made a pioneering housewife of her—for a time. Before that she had lived in California, Illinois, New York, and Ohio, enjoying jobs that included newspaper reporting, the teaching of small boys, publicity work at the Century of Progress, and the editing of publications for the Fels Research Institute. At Prescott, Arizona, she took up writing and eventually "made Hollywood" by selling her book, "Party Line," to the movies.

Throughout her autobiography the author snaps her fingers at a Pollyanna attitude, almost overstepping the bounds of good taste at times in her effort to be hard-boiled. Yet underneath the hard surface flows her evident sympathy for the handicapped and her desire to help them not only by offering much incidental advice of great value (on such matters as obtaining suitable jobs, the use of crutches and artificial limbs, the kinds of horses adaptable to amputees, etc.) but also by contradicting as loudly as possible the almost universal assumption that "unipeds" are unfitted for certain occupations.

Despite the fact that the author occasionally seems to throw her crutches in one's face, her book is essentially light and gay. Telling a success story as it does, a success story with a new twist of mixed levity and gravity, it is likely to capture the fancy of a fairly large public.

# An Uncomplicated Mind

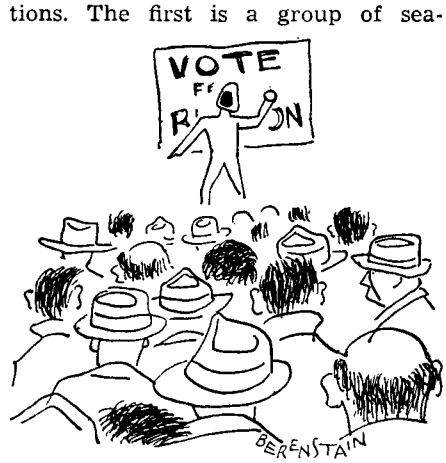
*ONLY MORE SURE. By Daniel Smythe. Boston: The Murray Press. 1946. Unpaginated. $1.50.*

Reviewed by BABETTE DEUTSCH

THE verse in this book, which contains a friendly foreword by William Rose Benét, was written by a young infantryman of Patton's Third Army. It presents, sometimes in rhyme and formal metres, sometimes in free, vaguely Whitmanesque strophes, the responses of an uncomplicated, hopeful mind to the experiences of war. Mr. Smythe, as both his title and the epigraph to his book assure us, returned from those horrors unchanged, surer than before of what he thought was true. The book does not make quite clear what those truths are, and the reader is apt to be taken aback at the realization that a man can live through the agonies and intensities, the tedium and the stupidities of modern warfare without a fresh feeling or a new thought to express.

The book is divided into four sections. The first is a group of seascapes, among them one fairly neat little imagist piece called "Ship at Night":

> The voices finger the darkness;
> The breathing and the whispering
> of the ship is all around—
> Everything steadily gliding onward.
> I feel one of the five oceans tighten
> around us.
> The water is like fluid rock
> Pressing in on the ship's side.




Part II, which is called "Interim," has to do with the author's experiences in France—a sunset, a stormy night, guard duty, the homesick talk of soldiers about food, but none of the pieces gives the reader an intimate sense of the moments about which Mr. Smythe chooses to write. The pieces in the third section, "Germany," seem to be more deeply felt, and occasionally offer a suggestive phrase, as in the description of artillery fire, when "the top of the sky shakes, filled up with wallowing sound" and the soldier hears "the hurt night screaming," or the piece on "The Outpost," with its "silent, aching coast of darkness" and the men "knee-deep in thunder like a pulsing floor." But there is no poem that can be singled out as wholly memorable.

The facile, cheerful pieces that make up the final section, "The Gates of Light," are more painful than anything else in the book, precisely because they assume that the order to cease firing was equivalent to peace, and that "a lock has been shut on our fears." Mr. Smythe may be "only more sure," but there are those who are too imaginative to share his blithe confidence, and who make better poetry of their confusion than he does of his certainties.



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# Cold Comfort

*THE GENTLE POWERS. By Stella Gibbons. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1946. 335 pp. $2.75.*

Reviewed by ROSEMARY CARR BENÉT

THE jacket of this new book by Stella Gibbons still bears the legend "by the author of 'Cold Comfort Farm'," though that remarkable work appeared in 1932. There is nothing in "The Gentle Powers" to suggest removing or changing that identifying phrase. It is a pleasant and readable novel but it neither rises to any great heights nor descends to any depths. "Cold Comfort Farm" devotees will be disappointed. By now, Miss Gibbons must suffer from this constant deprecating comparison, like a mother with one unusual, precocious offspring who continually overshadows the quiet, worthy members of her brood.

"The Gentle Powers" is about Margaret Steggles's struggle to adjust herself to her drab, unexciting, middle-class life. Margaret is a good girl, earnest, shy, plain—a schoolteacher. She is more than a little naive about the purveyors of higher culture. She longs to know artists. When she moves to London, she finds a lost ration book which leads to a chance acquaintanceship with just the glamorous circle she has been seeking. She gets to know the family of a well-known playwright, sees his handsome house, worms her way into the group. She mends fuses, takes care of the children, is *pushing* in her quiet way. The family in return uses her services mercilessly.

And finally she develops the equivalent of a schoolgirl crush on Gerald Challis himself. Her ideas are so far removed from reality that she can scarcely fail to be disillusioned and she is. Challis turns out to be a stuffed shirt and a philanderer. Kind hearts are found more often in Suburbia than in Bohemia it appears. The moral of the book is pointed out to Margaret by a wise older woman at

## *Daybreak*

By Witter Bynner

CEASE blowing
Your horn,
Cease crowing
For morn!

It is the throat
Of the smallest bird
Upon whose note
The dawn is heard.


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—HARRISON SMITH *in* PM

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## The Maple Tree

MISS OLIVIA GAIR, unloved and fading, sat in a lawn chair waiting—half hearing Mrs. Corbin.

". . . you really should see a doctor, dear, you really should . . ." came the buzzing voice, contracting and expanding like a voice in ether.

Then Olivia saw him . . . "Go away!" She cried with great effort, and even as she spoke she sprang to her feet and stretched out her arms. For Harry was running towards her. He was looking at her, yes, and crying "Mama! Mama!" . . .

Mrs. Corbin watched Olivia with growing horror, for they two were alone. There was no one else on the lawn . . .

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the end. Though she thought at first she must discover life through tragedy, she has learned through the gentler powers. "Beauty and Time and the Past and Pity (their names sound like a band of angels, don't they?). Laughter too—you need calming and lifting up into the light, not plunging into darkness and the struggle" is the way it is put.

Two different ways of English life are presented in meticulous detail. We look into several Hampstead, Highgate, and Westwood interiors. The conclusions, the implications, on the other hand, are obvious from the beginning. There is no element of surprise. One knows that the Challis connection will prove unrewarding and it is hard to believe that even such an unrealistic, dreamy girl, given good sense, wouldn't suspect so too. "If you go on being as green as you are, you'll have a hell of a time," a friend says to her at the end, and a truer word was never spoken. A minor grievance is an old one in English fiction. Miss Gibbons introduces two American soldiers, and doesn't do too badly with the hard-boiled one, Arnold Levinsky. The other, Earl Swinger, a young man "wearing the belted uniform of an American private" is supposed to be Professor of Drawing and European Art at Swordsville College (Kansas). Almost as soon as he has said, "Pleased to meet you," he remarks, "I can tell you it means a whole heap to me." Perhaps Miss Gibbons has been reading E. Guest? However, Earl corresponds to the Englishman in American fiction who begins every sentence with "I say, Old Bean." On the other hand, the Steggles and Challis households are full of neat distinctions and careful portraits.

Since "The Gentle Powers" is quiet and competent, it is perhaps ungrateful to expect more.

# The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

| *Title and Author* | *Crime, Place and Sleuth* | *Summing Up* | *Verdict* |
|---|---|---|---|
| WHAT HAPPENED AT HAZELWOOD *Michael Innes* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50) | Bad British baronet fatally bashed. His godawful relatives, insular and Antipodean, lead Insp. Cadover (neat name, that!) merry and murderous chase. | Innes turned orthodox (says jacket) produces completely heterodox, horrific, and often hilarious yarn—in which hoary clichés get amazing shock-treatment. | Caviar—best grade! |
| PURGATORY STREET *Roman McDougald* (Simon & Schuster: $2) | Plastic surgery so alters returned veteran's face and character that wife is in complete dither. Murder of kinsman further complicates matters. | Plenty of suspense and powerhouse pay-off—although tale is slightly sluggish and sleuth's progress involves some questionably heel-ish treatment. | Odd—but intriggin' |
| THE COMPLETE MURDER SAMPLER *Editor: James Nelson* (Crime Club: $2.50) | Sixteen fictional and factual crime yarns by expert American and English practitioners. Some old, some new—all tried-and-true. | Plump and cleverly categoried collection. Quality of material atones for possible lack of novelty—and all tales are worth rereading. | Bang-up Bedsider |
| RIDE THE PINK HORSE *Dorothy B. Hughes* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce $2.50) | "Sailor," gunman ex-sec. to crooked and welching Senator, meets "Sen" during Santa Fe *fiesta*. Object:—blood-money. Result: more murders. | Mystery angle subordinated to portrayal of mobsters psychological crack-up against festive background and among effective characters—Spanish-American, Indian and Gringo. | Rewarding terror-tale. |
| MURDER WITH A DIFFERENCE *Hull, Heard and Hamilton* (Random House: $2.75) | "The Murder of My Aunt," "A Taste for Honey," and "Hangover Square," complete and un-cut, with introduction by Christopher Morley. | Three hard-to-get top-notchers of recent vintage. A real feast for the finicky—marred only by occasional typographical bobbles. | Necessity for connoisseurs. |
| THE SHADE OF TIME *David Duncan* (Random House: $2.) | Pardoned murderer returns to scene of decade-old California crime; meets friends involved; ostensibly slays again. Detective Quigley elucidates esoteric affair. | Skip its higher-mathematical trappings if you wish. Beneath are expert plotting, interesting people, good talk and practically last-page enlightenment. | Scientific sizzler |



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## AMERICAN LITERATURE IN RUSSIA

(Continued from page 11)

than "The Iron Heel" and "The War of Classes."

If possible, London became even more popular during the war. An influence on lighter Russian fiction for years, London's style and virility have been especially telling on wartime stories. The most popular long short story to come out of the war, Vadim Kozhevnikov's "March-April," can serve as a typical example. From beginning to end, the story is written in a Jack London manner. It recounts the adventure of a Soviet officer and a girl radio operator who were parachuted down to spy and wreak havoc in the enemy rear. Stalin was so impressed he telephoned from the Kremlin to the front line to congratulate the young author.

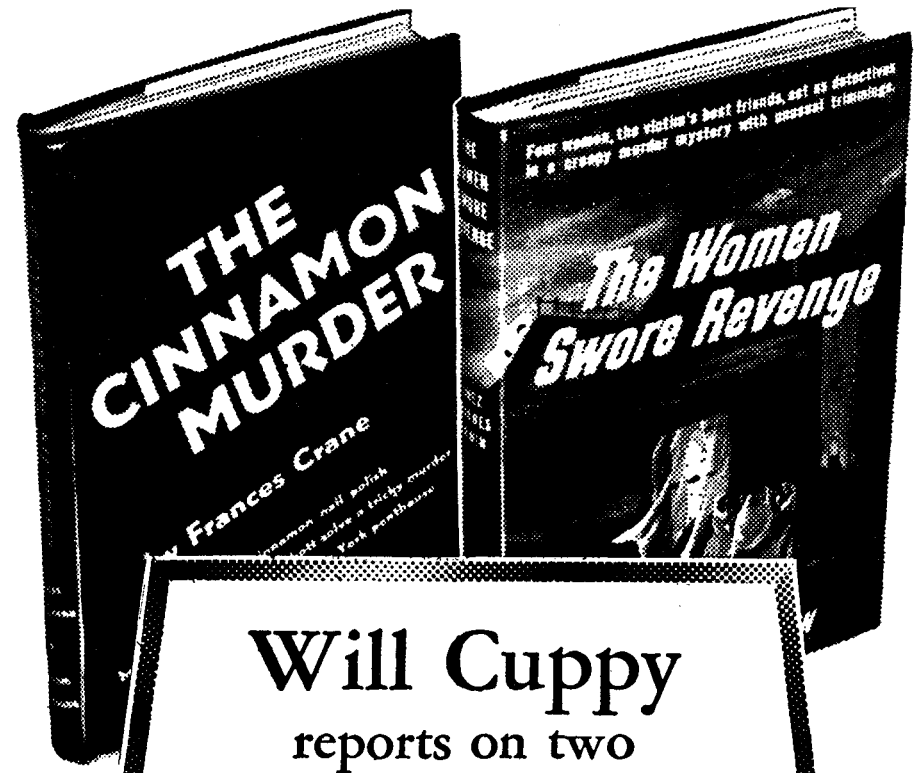
The ancient, steadily growing mutual sympathy of both nations formed an excellent background for the mounting interest in American literature on the part of the Russians. But now we have come to the difficult and dramatic period in Russian-American relations that followed World War One, which all but wrecked that friendship and found reflection in the literary intercourse between the countries.

The period was characterized by mutual fear, suspicion, and condemnation. The Russians deeply resented American intervention in the north and in Siberia, the "red scare" which culminated in radical witch hunts and the "Soviet Ark," and the policy of hostile non-recognition of the USSR, to which the United States Government adhered until 1933. American resentment was just as self-righteous and violent in its expression, directed as it was against the separate peace the Bolsheviks signed with Germany, against the Red terror, repudiation of foreign debts, militant atheism, creation and activity of the Third International, and, finally, the anti-capitalist propaganda which the Soviet government was accused of conducting in the United States and other countries.

It was against this background of mutual recrimination and resentment, a discussion of which remains completely outside the scope of this study, that the "bad men" of American literature,—Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and Theodore Dreiser—became widely popular in Soviet Russia. The names of other writers of social significance—John Dos Passos, Langston Hughes, Erskine Caldwell, John Steinbeck, and Richard Wright—were soon to join the big three.

These men were engaged in shaking up the American social conscience in the face of American complacency. But they became the mirror of American life for Russian readers. Their books worked havoc with the almost universally accepted conception of the United States as a man-made paradise, and of Americans as muscular, upright, free, and happy demigods.

The king of muckrakers, Upton Sinclair, grew to rival in popularity, at least with the Soviet publishing houses, even the darling of the Russian readers, Mark Twain. Sinclair was, of course, known in Russia long before the Revolution. Leo Tolstoy strongly recommended "The Jungle" for publication in Russia as soon as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—*N. Y. Herald Tribune Book Review.* $2.00

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it came out in 1906, saying the book was "remarkable" and praising the author's knowledge of the daily life of American workers. Simultaneously Tolstoy took Sinclair to task for his socialistic views. Years later, in 1915, Lenin did too. He said Sinclair was a "socialist of emotion, without theoretical background. He poses the problem in a simple way: indignant over the approaching war, he seeks salvation from it in socialism."

After the Revolution, Sinclair's books literally flooded the market. Seven editions of his collected works appeared in five years, supplemented by mass issues of his most popular novels. Many of them, especially "The Jungle" and "Jimmie Higgins," became compulsory reading for all students of social science and of the structure of capitalist society.

Soviet readers found Sinclair Lewis artistically more satisfying, especially in "Arrowsmith," which many Russians regard as the best American novel.

Parallel with the appreciation of Lewis grew Dreiser's bulky fame. Practically every one of his novels has been printed and sold in Russia in numbers great enough to make them best sellers in any man's country.

On the basis of frank talks with many Russians over a period of years, of recorded reactions by library readers in Moscow and other cities, and of statements by Soviet writers, I have become firmly convinced that the stark picture of American reality the Russians are discovering in the works of the authors mentioned above is seen by them least of all as a condemnation of America or of human nature. Strange as it may seem to many Americans, the Russians find in these works the humanism and passionate honesty, the suffering, and the quest they have been used to finding in the books of their own best writers.

That is why the words of the Soviet poet Pavel Antokolsky may be said to reflect the general attitude of Soviet readers to the American authors under discussion: "They participate in the daily struggle we are waging against the forces of fascism. . . . They are part of the daily life of the Soviet people."

No study of American literature in Russia can justifiably omit Ernest Hemingway. He has been a veritable revelation to Soviet readers, particularly to intellectuals and, first and foremost, to writers. He is the most eagerly read and most passionately argued contemporary foreign author. His works, when they can be found in second-hand book shops, command unbelievably high prices. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" has not been published in Russia, but the manuscript of a masterly translation has been read by practically all the members of the Writers' Union, by editors, literary critics, and laymen who have any kind of a pull in the literary world. Critical essays are being written about him. Ivan Kashkin, one of the best Soviet critics and translators, is about to complete a book on Hemingway.

Ilya Ehrenburg recently said in a brilliant essay on Hemingway that he can have no imitators because "his art is organic." But, despite the eloquence of Ehrenburg's argument, there is already something of a Hemingway school in present-day Soviet fiction.

The Russians gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to American literature. They are also proudly conscious of the influence their own great writers have had on American men of letters. The Soviet poet Ilya Selvinsky put it well when he wrote a short time ago:

"I shall not say that they imitate Leo Tolstoy or Anton Chekov. These American writers have sprung from the soil of America and are deeply rooted in it. But, having grown out of America, and having listened to the world around them, they caught the sound of a kindred voice. It came from Russia, so distant and seemingly alien in everything."

# *The Ray*

By Lawrence Olson

WHAT we took with the handline from under the wreck
Bloodied the brown sand while the winded dog
(Sir Wm Phips) growled in the palmettos.

No fish or other creature had he seen
That lay upon the beach so still and green.

And John said there it is, and I said let it die,
But Dorothea drew her shiny knife.
She stabbed it like a wife.

And long she waited for a reprimand
For opening a rainbow in the sand.



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# The New Recordings

| COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM, NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS | ENGINEERING | | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Recording Technique* | *Surface* | |
| SPANISH SOUVENIR. De Falla, Fire Dance; Albeniz, Tango, Seguidillas, Sevilla; Granados, Dances #5 & #6. Andor Foldes. Continental 34 (3 10″) | Piano slightly on the tinny side, and bass could be stronger. Surface irregular on my copy. | B— to B+ | Clear, precise, energetic performances of good familiar music that could be—for once—a bit more sultry. |
| PEE WEE RUSSELL JAZZ ENSEMBLE. Russell, Jackson, Dickenson, Casey, Palmer, Grauso. DISC 632 (3 10″)....$3.15 | Brilliant recording. Bass and drums strongly emphasized. High level. | B | This is none of my biz—I'm a jazz ignoramus; but if you like interesting noises try some of these extraordinary ones. |
| CARLOS MONTOYA, guitar solos. Disc 615 (3 10″).....$3.15 | A good, masculine guitar recording; bad surfaces obscure some of its subtlety. | B— to C+ | Dance accompanist of both Argentina and Argentinita. Typical skilful Spanish "popular" dance music. |
| FOLK SONGS AND BALLADS OF AMERICA. Margaret Dodd Singers. Hargail HN705 (2 10″) $2.50 | The Hargail recording is exceptionally smooth with remarkable "presence," clarity of diction. Best set is distorted, lacks highs and lows, words diff. to get. Example of improvement in small company recording since the war. | B+ | Folk music, sung unaccompanied, in rather "classical" settings. Both groups use trained solo-type voices, not always blending perfectly. The new album is musically far more satisfactory, thanks to better recording. |
| *Comparison:* SONGS OF EARLY AMERICA. Elie Siegmeister and his Singers. Bost ES 1 Out of Print | | C | |

## ANDOR FOLDES

ANDOR FOLDES is a pianist for record collectors to watch. Yes, he is a virtuoso, above most, and a consummate pianistic showman, too. Of the common types—the long haired, passionate and the deceptively-easy, toss-it-off type he is decidedly the latter. A genius of eclecticism, his effortless technique lends itself to any style you can imagine, from Aaron Copland and Charles Ives to Chopin, Liszt, and the Spaniards (see above). Asked shortly before his recent Carnegie Hall concert whether he was practising hard on it (the usual question!) he answered with perfect cheek that he didn't bother to practise much for concerts—after all, he'd been a pianist for twenty-five years. Yet at that concert he gave first performances of several contemporary works, in addition to playing one of the longest piano sonatas on record, the Liszt B minor. Foldes is indeed so detached, so sure of his technique that often he seems to sit back in amusement watching his own fingers perform.

But of more interest than the Foldes technique is the Foldes music. His programs (as small town audiences the country over can say) are decidedly unusual and always stimulating. His best gift is the ability to make contemporary music understandable and near to the American audience. Foldes is, unlike many pianists, in active contact with leading musicians of today. Numerous grateful (and no doubt surprised) composers have written directly for him, and one of the most ingratiating Foldes tricks is to present the composer himself as a part of his program, for a few words to the distrustful audience.

The album above of Spanish music is a measure of Foldes, if only because it represents his idea of a strictly "popular" recording. (His optimism is heartwarmingly American: "But there is no reason why such fine music *shouldn't* sell a million copies!") Knowing well enough what some other virtuosos are capable of today, under the Hollywood big-money influence, you can be sure that whatever Foldes turns his hand to next on records will be popular in the very best sense. How about an album of contemporary American music in the Foldes manner, Mr. Foldes?

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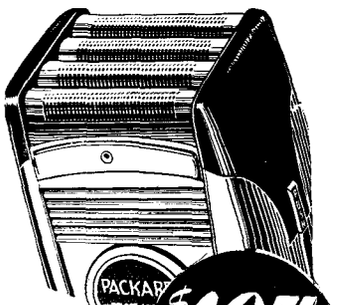

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# the Phoenix Nest

## NEW HOUSING LAWS

landlords
let the sun
seep and drip
in little pools
onto the street
in the street
at the tenements' feet

for children to skip in
and the dying lying
on window sills
to bathe and dip in

and girls to walk in
like baths of milk

yes
landlords let the sun
do this in the street
provided it keeps its
place

sun if come
is as milk and pleasant
as shining diamonds
bright as living
bathing as loving
clean as
loving.

sun if come
is bright as
new housing laws
and children's wishes

as if the landlord
were as dead as a dirty nail.

now the landlord isn't dead.
now it is no child's wish.
just hard fighting
for more homes
for us people

stop dreaming

STANLEY STEINER.

* * *

Roger A. Johnson of Jackson Heights, L. I., threatens my reason with the following:

> Noting the ode in the Nest on the place names of Maine, I rise to inquire whether your readers can find a rime for the name of that beautiful little lake in the town of Webster, Massachusetts, namely Lake Chargagoggmanchaugagoggchaubunagungamogg? That would really be something to record. Tradition is that the name means "You fish on your side, I will fish on my side, and we'll all fish in the middle." You will find that all geographical authorities are agreed on the authenticity of the name.

While C. E. Stevens of 75 Alexander Street, Vancouver, B. C., tells me:

> I have in my possession authentic writings of Sir Walter Scott and William Makepeace Thackeray in the form of autographed books and letters bearing the handwriting and signatures of these two celebrated authors. These I would be prepared to dispose of to anyone who was genuinely interested in the collection and preservation of historical datum.
>
> In the event that anyone may be interested in the purchase of these original manuscripts, I am prepared to submit conclusive evidence of authenticity and supply you with any other information you may desire, upon request.

* * *

Acknowledged from R. D. Miller of Round Pond, Maine:

> In these Bikinic days it seems a wild presumption to declare that anything is either new or old or worth our passing notice. Nevertheless I dropped into the Phoenix Nest (*SRL* June 29) just as Mr. Benét was praising the Byronic stanzas *(ottava rima)* of Leonard Bacon. "And speaking of that," he went on, "isn't it about time to mention—in a day of essays on *(sic)* rime (new spelling) which may rhyme but often can't possibly be scanned—that an epic called 'Ulug Beg' awaits (to my mind) the certain acclaim of posterity?"

As long ago as 1910 a primer of English verse with which I happen to be familiar used *rime* consistently without explanation or apology. It might have pointed out, for whatever it is worth, the obvious fact that seventeenth-century *rhyme* is the "new spelling," not Middle English *rime*. And if W. R. B.'s quarrel with contemporary "essays in rime" is that they do not scan, he should welcome a spelling that accentuates the fundamental difference between rime and rhythm.

* * *

The editors of *Variegation: A Free Verse Quarterly,* Room 667, 124 West Fourth Street, Los Angeles 13, California, send me three copies in which I note some good work by Marcia Masters, daughter of the famous Edgar Lee Masters. They say:

> *Variegation* excludes verse in conventional forms from its pages not in order to attempt disparagement of the glories of the past, but to work for an improvement in the status of free verse. We pay a minimum of twenty cents a line for unrimed free verse, and we would like to hear from some of the eastern poets.

* * *

When Miss Helen Carter King wrote "At the Concert," which the *Nest* was glad to print (August 17 issue), Raymond Hosken of Northampton, Massachusetts, decided to follow her exposé of the feeling of audiences by a sonnet on the attitude of the performer, which follows:

### VIRTUOSO

A telling phrase, the virtuoso said;
But, maestro, don't you feel it needs a lift?
I think, now, my cadenza there instead
Might prove most advantageous. A rare gift
Assuredly; and yet, sir, it appears
Enlightened listeners deem my version best:
They stormed me in Vienna, and the cheers
Rang loud in Paris and in Budapest!
The public loves the music? Fiddlesticks!
It's the performer whom they come to hear.
You mark my word, you'd all be in a fix
Were any one of us to disappear!
*The maestro nodded gravely. On the wall,*
*Being framed, Mozart expressed no view at all.*

* * *

As the Grand Mufti has been so much in the news of late, the thought of him has engendered the following:

Now much has been made of the Mufti,
As once of Swat's famous Akhond;
But what of the Baboo, the Fudky, Maulvee,
The Capital of Buch and his family tree,
The Ban of Croatia and Olxstern's Stavost?
They're some of the titles I relish the most.

—But probably they are all obsolete.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.



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# DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 658

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

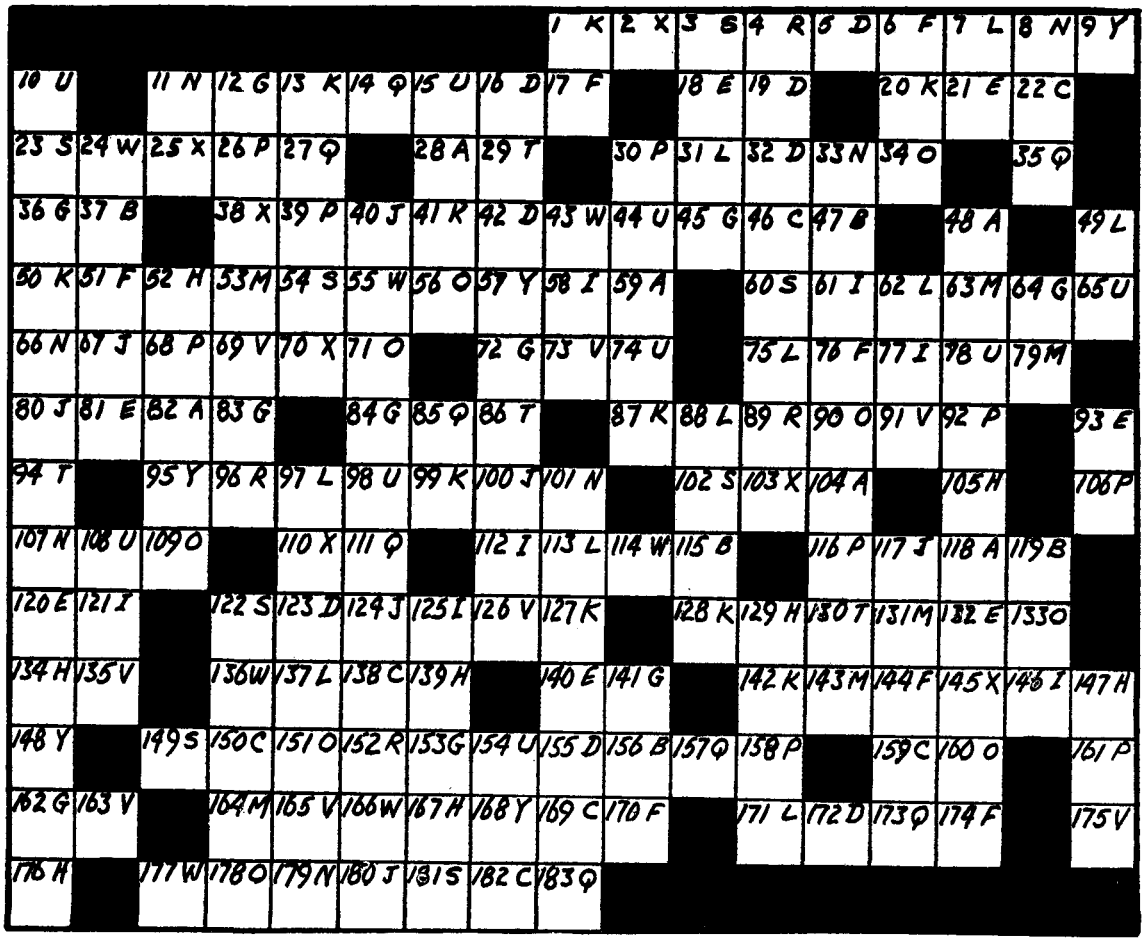
| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| A. Kirman carpet of particularly fine grade. | 118 48 82 104 28 59 |
| B. Exclamation expressing surprise, etc. (2 wds.). | 37 119 156 47 115 |
| C. American Quaker preacher and abolitionist (1720-72; "Journal"). | 22 150 138 46 159 169 182 |
| D. Irish nationalist leader, known as "the Liberator" (1775-1847). | 19 5 32 155 123 172 42 16 |
| E. Foil or wire of gold, silver, or brass. | 132 140 93 21 18 120 81 |
| F. Involving momentous consequences. | 17 6 144 76 174 51 170 |
| G. A corrupt constituency ("Pickwick Papers"). | 83 72 141 36 84 45 162 12 153 64 |
| H. Story of a dog by John Muir. | 176 134 105 167 139 147 129 52 |
| I. Current English actor in radio, films, and stage; member of Old Vic Company. | 121 112 125 77 61 58 146 |
| J. Petroleum, esp. the more volatile varieties. | 117 67 40 80 124 180 100 |
| K. Receptive of arguments or ideas (Comp.). | 50 128 127 20 13 99 142 1 41 87 |
| L. Manifestation of partiality to the interest of one, to the neglect of others. | 75 97 62 137 31 113 7 88 171 49 |

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| M. Large mammals mainly of Central and So. America, allied to horse and rhinoceros. | 53 143 131 63 79 164 |
| N. English essayist (1778-1830). | 11 107 66 101 8 33 179 |
| O. Equal odds in betting (2 wds.). | 34 151 109 56 90 178 71 133 160 |
| P. Novel by Scott (1826). | 30 116 39 92 158 68 161 106 26 |
| Q. A speech phenomenon peculiar to a definite geographical area. | 35 27 85 183 173 111 14 157 |
| R. To cement. | 96 4 89 152 |
| S. Exquisitely sensitive. | 3 122 149 181 60 54 23 102 |
| T. An islet. | 29 94 130 86 |
| U. Those connected with the execution of Louis XVI (Fr. Hist.). | 108 78 10 154 98 65 74 15 44 |
| V. Very young; postembryonal. | 73 91 165 175 135 163 69 126 |
| W. Title and heroine of novel by Frances Burney (1778). | 166 114 43 136 55 177 24 |
| X. English poet and man of letters (1774-1843; poet laureate, 1813). | 25 70 145 110 38 2 103 |
| Y. A burning of the surface. | 148 168 9 95 57 |

## DIRECTIONS

*To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.*

*When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).*




Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 13 of this issue.

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Man Bites Dog

*A*

## *Publisher Reviews the Critics*

For both the writer and reader poetry is the most subjective of all the arts. Because of the story it tells narrative poetry is more easily understood and has a more general appeal. It is lyric poetry which demands of the reader an understanding of the author's mood and the emotional experience of which he is writing. Mrs. Case's first book, a long narrative poem, AT MIDNIGHT ON THE 31ST OF MARCH, was widely and well liked and fondly remembered. Her second volume of verse, FREEDOM'S FARM, is divided into three parts. Parts one and two are collections of shorter, more personal poems. Part three is the long narrative poem which gives the book its title. FREEDOM'S FARM is the work of a poet who has deepened and matured, who feels keenly and who has put these sharpened and personal emotions into poetic form. Critics took this book seriously, and because of the subjective quality of poetry, each one reviewed it differently. The resulting comment is an interesting and controversial collection of opinion.

There are those who liked the title poem of the book, "Freedom's Farm".

> "The title poem is filled with the spirit of the common and uncommon folks who made America 'Freedom's mighty farm' . . . especially of those who 'turned the screw of courage tighter in the night'".
>
> *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*

> "I *liked* 'Freedom's Farm' and want more and more." Walter D. Edmonds

Others preferred the shorter poems from Parts One and Two.

> ". . . some of the poems written during the war years are deft and memorable: 'Calendar for War Time', 'For the Victors' and her poignant lines on the children of famine . . . The two finest poems in the volume, dramatic and compulsive, are . . . 'Conscription' and 'The Bull that Came Out of the Sea' . . . It is unfortunate that the title piece 'Freedom's Farm' is a much weaker work."
>
> *Ruth Lechlitner, N. Y. Herald Tribune*

> "As in her memorable first book, AT MIDNIGHT ON THE 31ST OF MARCH, she has in the title poem a good idea, but not the requisite ability and imagery and metrics to turn it into poetry . . . 'The Legend of the Unicorn' is a perfect thing of its kind, and the author writes admirable sonnets. Of the years 1938-45 she speaks at once passionately and sternly. Her 'London Bells' makes use of the familiar nursery refrain for an effect of terrible irony."
> *John Holmes, N. Y. Times and the Boston Herald*

> "A very good book of poems. I read and re-read many. I admire the deft and apparently effortless handling of difficult forms, such as terza rima; I admired certain superb lines . . . 'The Cows have trampled the broken stone'; 'She was married only a short time to her first husband'; and 'The Bull that Came Out of the Sea' . . . I would attribute to the author if I should see them signed Anonymous. She tells a story superbly and that is what few people do."—*Morris Bishop.*

> "The poet's talents are definitely in the shorter pieces, wherein she achieves a compact, striking effect without spending herself as elsewhere in her work in 'worrying' a theme to inconsequential lengths. This is the fault I find with the title narrative and with her longer ballad 'The Bull that Came Out of the Sea'. But when she addresses herself to a stricter pattern, as in 'Forest Night', 'Over this House its roof' and the 'Legend of the Unicorn' the best thing in the book: a forty-line lyric of ten stanzas she is eminently successful."
>
> *Gustav Davidson, The World In Book*

Other reviewers found merit in the whole book.

> ". . . Whatever Mrs. Case's subject there is a strong individual feature which runs through all, a simple directness and force which cuts away all superfluities . . . one is conscious of a kind of muscular strength, a bone-like hardness much more difficult to achieve."
>
> *Beulah Rector, Watertown Times*

> ". . . the poems are fine. They are the work of an assured poet, deep-rooted in her own integrity of feeling, subtle and flexible."
> *Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Dallas Times-Herald*

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